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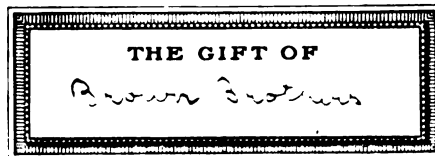
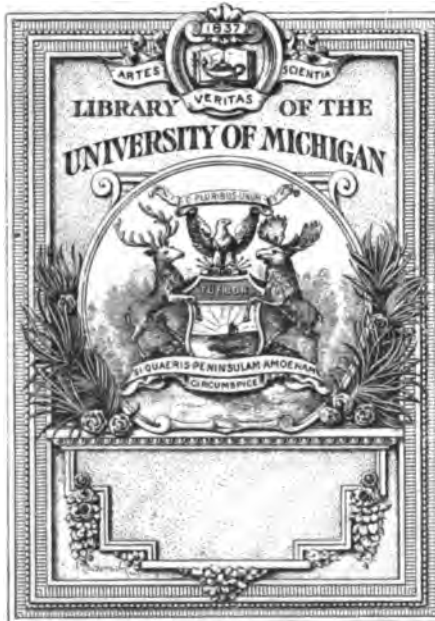


With the compliments of

# Brown Brothers & Company

39 Wall Street

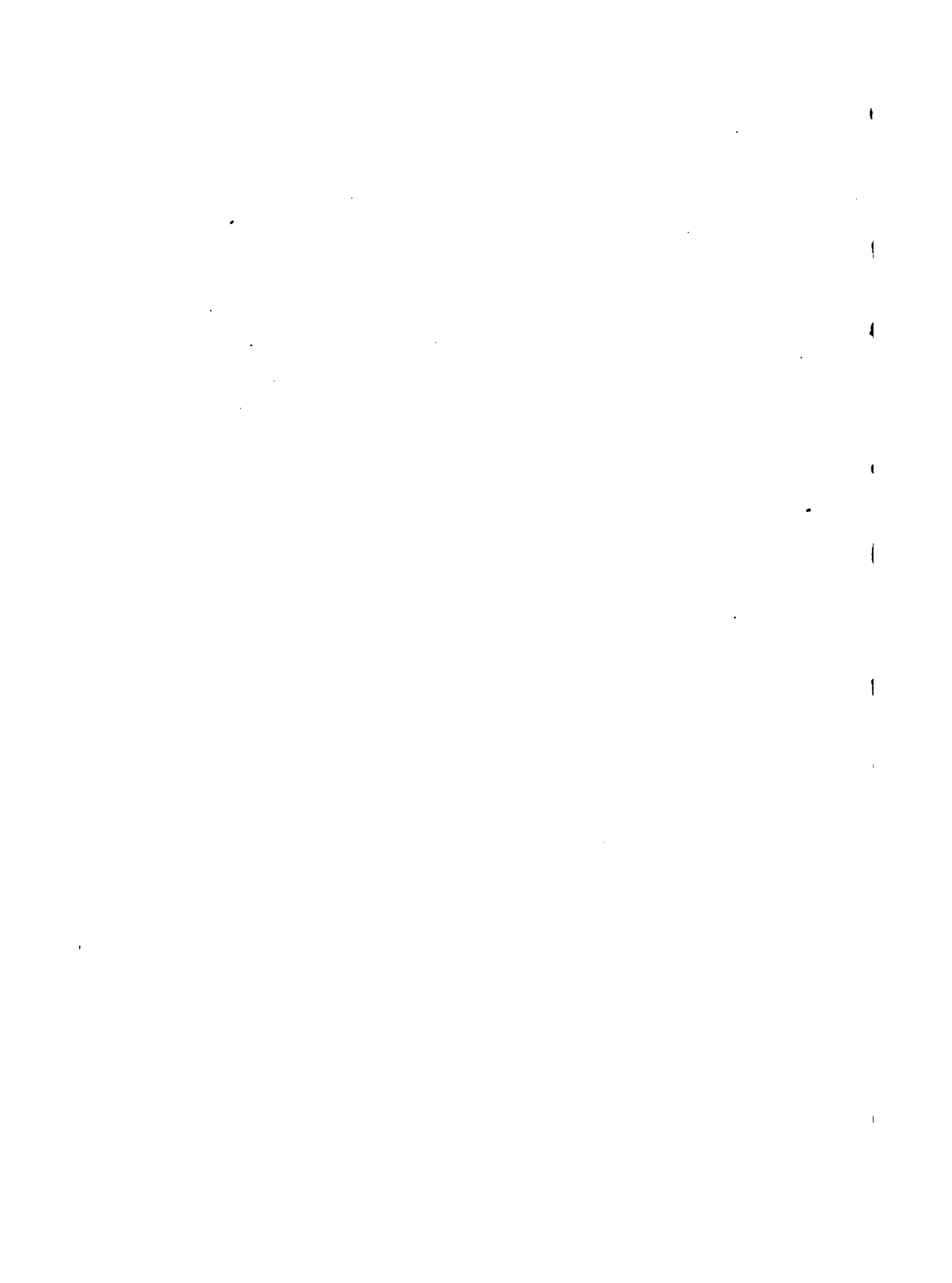
New York



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**A HUNDRED YEARS OF  
MERCHANT BANKING .**



**“ I know not why commerce in England should not have its old families rejoicing to be connected with commerce from generation to generation. It has been so in other countries; I trust it will be so in this country.”**

**GLADSTONE.**

Wol



1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the members of the committee.

**ALEXANDER BROWN AND HIS FOUR SONS**

**Alexander Brown, 1764-1834**

**George Brown, 1787-1859**

**Sir William Brown, 1784-1864**

**John A. Brown, 1788-1872**

**James Brown, 1791-1877**

# A HUNDRED YEARS OF MERCHANT BANKING

A HISTORY OF  
BROWN BROTHERS AND COMPANY  
BROWN, SHIPLEY & COMPANY  
AND THE ALLIED FIRMS

ALEXANDER BROWN AND SONS, Baltimore; WILLIAM AND JAMES BROWN AND COMPANY, Liverpool; JOHN A. BROWN AND COMPANY, BROWNS AND BOWEN, BROWN BROTHERS AND COMPANY, Philadelphia; BROWN BROTHERS AND COMPANY, Boston.

BY  
JOHN CROSBY BROWN

PRIVATELY PRINTED  
NEW YORK  
1909

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JOHN CROSBY BROWN**



02571125

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Reclass 4-10-30 T.E.N

**TO MY PARTNERS**

THAT A STUDY OF THE TRADITIONS OF THE PAST AND OF THE EXAMPLE OF THE FOUNDERS MAY STIMULATE THEM TO TRANSMIT TO THEIR DESCENDANTS AND SUCCESSORS THE HIGH IDEALS OF THEIR PREDECESSORS AND TO MAINTAIN THE GOOD NAME OF THE OLD FIRM WITH CREDIT UNIMPAIRED;

**TO MY SONS**

THAT THEY MAY APPRECIATE THE RICH LEGACY OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER AND HIGH COMMERCIAL INTEGRITY WHICH IS THEIR INHERITANCE;

**TO MY WIFE**

WITHOUT WHOSE SUGGESTION THIS WORK WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN BEGUN AND WITHOUT WHOSE ENCOURAGEMENT IT WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN FINISHED.

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## PREFACE

THIS book owes its origin to a request by my wife that I should write for the information of my sons and my partners the history of the firm with which I have been connected for nearly fifty years, and of which I have been a partner for forty-six. When my attention was called seriously to the subject I realized that there was no one but myself living, who, either from personal knowledge or association with those who knew, could undertake the task. I have a distinct recollection of every important member of the firm, except my grandfather. Of the forty-seven partners in all the firms, including the Baltimore house, I have known all but five, *i. e.*, my grandfather, Alexander Brown, the founder of the firm, Messrs. Frodsham and Priestman, unimportant members of the Liverpool house, Mr. Perry in Baltimore, and Johnston McLanahan in Philadelphia. Of the thirty-four members of the New York, Philadelphia, and English firms, twenty-seven have been my partners, and of the thirteen partners of Alexander Brown & Sons, Baltimore, I have been closely associated in business with eight, two of whom were also my partners. Of the forty-eight agents representing the firms in Boston, Charleston, Savannah, New Orleans, and Mobile, including some also who have signed for the firm per procuracy in the home offices, I have known all except James Adger and James Black in Charleston, Dr. John Cumming in Savannah, Messrs.

Vowell and Lee in New Orleans, A. J. Ingersol in Mobile, and Herman Perry in Baltimore, and I have been associated in active business with all but those mentioned.

Unfortunately, most of the old letters and many of the old books of the New York firm were destroyed many years ago. They were so numerous that adequate space could not be provided for their preservation. In fact, their removal from the attic story of the office building in New York was ordered by the Insurance Companies. From the inflammable character of the material they were a constant menace to the neighborhood. Only the more important ledgers and books of accounts were kept, and from them the dates and essential facts, except such as I had learned from my father and uncles, were either supplied or verified. This will account for the fact that I have been able to produce only a few letters written in the early days of the New York house, only one letter book of that period having been preserved. The old Liverpool records were destroyed when the house was closed in 1889, and I have had to rely for the history of that period upon my recollection of the story as told by my father and by my uncle, Sir William Brown, with the latter of whom I lived from 1860 to 1862. The history of the firm is, therefore, fragmentary. There are many gaps I should have liked to fill, but it is now impossible to do so. The collection of the material in the midst of a busy life has occupied a number of years, and only within the past year have I secured the leisure to put the matter at my disposal into shape. For obvious reasons I have passed lightly over the later history of the firm and avoided all mention of recent transactions. With the single exception of Sir

Alexander Hargreaves Brown, the senior member of the London house, a short notice of whose parliamentary career appears in the Appendix, no attempt has been made to give any account of the activities of the living members of the firm.

For the opinions expressed and the suggestions made in the following pages, the writer alone is responsible. He is also responsible for the correctness of the facts and dates except so far as he has been able to give his authority for such matters.

If the perusal of this brief history gives to my children and to my partners even a small part of the pleasure which the reproduction of the life of those early days has afforded me, and if the story of the past shall help my partners in the management of the business in the future, I shall be amply repaid.

In conclusion, I desire to express my acknowledgments to Miss Clara Buffum, Miss Marion Cooke, Miss Katharine R. Halley, and Miss Ella H. Judson, for their efficient help at different times. My special thanks are due to my daughter, Miss M. M. Brown, my amanuensis in the winter of 1908, and to my son and daughter-in-law, Professor and Mrs. William Adams Brown, for their criticism and for their help in seeing the book through the press.

NEW YORK, May, 1909.



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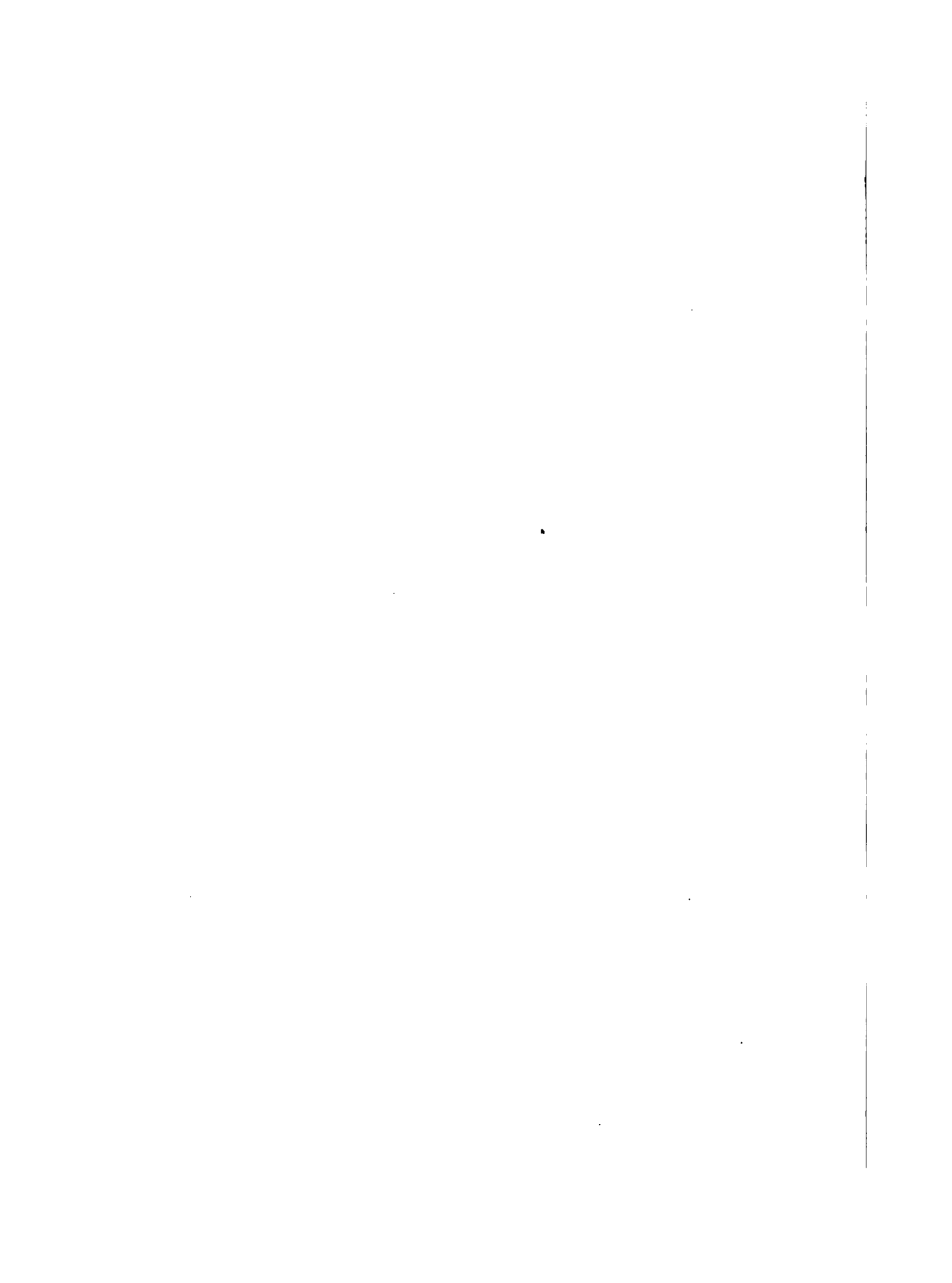
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**JOHN CROSBY BROWN**



## JOHN CROSBY BROWN

MAY 22, 1838—JUNE 25, 1909

**O**N Friday, June 25, 1909, the day on which the last page of corrected proof was returned to the publishers, Mr. John Crosby Brown, the author, died at his home at Brighthurst, Orange Mountain, New Jersey. For six months he had been seriously ill, but, in spite of growing weakness, he continued actively to interest himself in the various enterprises in which he was engaged, and it was not until a month before his death that he could be persuaded to turn over to others the burden of responsibility which he had so long carried. Among the interests which engaged his time and thought during the closing months of his life this book held an important place. He followed the details of its progress with unremitting attention. In spite of other and engrossing cares he was able to complete the correction of the entire proof and to decide every question of principle connected with its publication, and there remained to the present writer, after the opportunity of consultation with the author had ceased, only the last formal corrections before the book was finally ready for the press.

It was Mr. Brown's plan to include in his history a brief account of the lives of those of the partners of the allied firms who had died before the appearance of the



book. These sketches, on which he expended much time and labor, appear either in the text or in the appendix at the close. Now that Mr. Brown himself has joined this honorable company it seems appropriate that a brief notice of his own life should here be inserted to fill the gap which his modesty has left and to convey to those of his friends and associates in business, to whom this book may chance to find its way, those facts concerning its author which it would be of interest to them to know.

John Crosby Brown was born in New York City on the 22d of May, 1838. He was the fifth son of Mr. James Brown, the founder of the New York house. His mother, Eliza Maria Coe, Mr. Brown's second wife, was the daughter of the Reverend Jonas Coe, long an honored clergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church in Troy, New York. The family was a large one, consisting of eleven children in all, seven by the first marriage<sup>1</sup> and four by the second, of whom Mr. John Crosby Brown was the last survivor. Of the most tragic event in the family history, the loss on the ill-fated *Arctic* of six members of Mr. James Brown's immediate family circle, Mr. Brown has given some account in the book.<sup>2</sup>

The house in which Mr. Brown was born was situated in Leonard Street, and I have often heard him tell of the primitive conditions, judged by modern standards, which prevailed in the New York of his boyhood. He attended a school in Dey Street, kept by Mr. Daniel T. Bacon, and the playground on which the boys exercised was a vacant lot at the back of the school extending through to Vesey

<sup>1</sup> One of these, a son, died in infancy.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 240.

Street. Later, the school moved to Washington Square, and Mr. Brown, Sr., finding Leonard Street no longer a desirable neighborhood, removed his home to University Place. His country house was on Weehawken Heights, three miles north of Hoboken, and his garden was on the site now occupied by the station and terminals of the West Shore Railroad.

Unwilling to leave his parents, who had early learned to depend upon him to an unusual degree, Mr. Brown entered Columbia College, where he graduated in 1859 at the head of his class, receiving 11,518 marks out of a possible 11,533, during the Junior and Senior years. He was also awarded the good-fellowship prize by the unanimous vote of his classmates. Too constant use of his right hand in college brought on writer's cramp as a result of which Mr. Brown was obliged to learn to write with his left hand—an art which he acquired in three months.

After his graduation he travelled for a year in Europe and the East with his cousins, William Richmond Brown, of London, and John A. Brown, Jr., of Philadelphia, and his friend and classmate, the brilliant Stephen Whitney Phoenix. The time was given to study as well as to sight-seeing, and Mr. Brown brought back with him a knowledge of Egyptian history and antiquities unusual at the time. Indeed, all his life long he was a singularly intelligent and enthusiastic traveller. He visited many countries, both on business and pleasure, and he brought to each an intelligent observation, an unfailing interest, and an accurate and retentive memory. Those whose privilege it has been to have him for a fellow traveller

will not soon forget how much his presence added not only to the pleasure but to the instructiveness and permanent value of the trip.

It had been Mr. Brown's original intention to enter the ministry, and there was much in his natural tastes, as well as in his early training, which fitted him for a professional life; but the death of two of his elder brothers, and the ill health of the third deprived his father of the advice and support upon which he had counted, and Mr. Brown therefore decided to enter the office, which he did in the year 1860. He received his training at the Liverpool office, returning to New York in the autumn of 1862, and becoming a partner on January 1, 1864.

Of Mr. Brown's connection with the business, of which he became the head, and to the efficiency and success of which he so greatly contributed, all that it would be fitting here to say may be learned from the pages which follow. In Chapter VIII he has given a picture of the conditions which prevailed in the Liverpool office at the time when he entered the business, and of the nature of his early training. In Chapter XVII he has summed up with characteristic brevity and reserve the impressions left on his mind by a retrospect of forty-nine years of business life. The gaps left in the narrative, so far as they affect the writer's own part of it, will be supplied by those who touched him in the daily intercourse of the office and of the street, and who there learned to estimate the true character of the man with whom they had to do.

Outside of his connection with Brown Brothers & Company, Mr. Brown filled many offices of trust in the business community. He was a Trustee of the United

States Trust Company and its first Vice President. He was a Trustee and Director of the Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Company, and a member of the executive committee. He was a Director of the Bank of New York, N. B. A., a Trustee of the Bank for Savings, of the United States Lloyds, of the Ocean Accident & Guarantee Corporation, of the London Guarantee & Accident Corporation, Limited, and a Director of the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad. He was Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce of New York and was the Treasurer of its charity fund. His business brought him into intimate contact with railroad men and railroad problems, of which he had an expert knowledge, gained in part through his experience with the Newburgh, Dutchess & Connecticut Railroad Company, a little road, the management of which he took over in bankruptcy, of which he became the President, and which by his careful and painstaking management he restored to solvency.

But Mr. Brown's energies were by no means confined to business. The ideal interests which had engaged his allegiance in his college days continued to command his loyalty in later life. An accurate and finished scholar, he read widely and intelligently, and the breadth and variety of his information constantly surprised those who met him. He was early chosen a member of the Board of Education of the City of New York, and served with energy and efficiency for twelve years until the pressure of other duties compelled him, much to his regret, to resign. He was for twenty-four years a Trustee of Columbia University, his Alma Mater, and followed with interest and approval the movement which, under Mr. Low's

leadership, led to its transfer to the new site on Morning-side Heights. He was a Trustee of the Presbyterian Hospital and of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. First interested in the Museum by the collection of musical instruments made by Mrs. Brown, which bears his name, and which, from the first, enlisted his sympathy and help, he later became the Museum's Treasurer, and to the details of its financial management gave much time and personal attention. He was a Director of the Union Settlement Association, a warm friend and supporter of the Nurses' Settlement in Henry Street, and of the Church House carried on in connection with the Church of Sea and Land. One of his most recent interests was the Nurses' Convalescent and Rest Home, on Orange Mountain, founded in 1907, which owes its existence to his generosity, and of which, from the first, he was a faithful friend. The most recent outgrowth of this, a Children's Home, was the object of his keenest interest during his illness.

But such a list gives a very inadequate account of Mr. Brown's philanthropic and charitable interests. His services to his fellow-men cannot be measured by his official connections. No good cause commended itself to his judgment which he did not support. He was one of the little group of men, of whom Mr. D. Willis James, Mr. William E. Dodge, Jr., and Mr. Morris K. Jesup were notable examples, who did so much to give character to the life of New York and to set the standard for its future development. They believed that wealth carried responsibilities as well as conferred privileges, and sought to impress the characteristics of a Christian civilization upon the institutions of their time.

With the exception of the position on the Board of Education, already mentioned, Mr. Brown never held public office, but he followed the political movements of the day with intelligent interest. He was a member of the Committee of Seventy, which in 1894 secured the defeat of Tammany Hall and the election of Mayor Strong, and served on its Executive Committee. The value of his services to the community was fitly recognized by Williams College, which in 1907 conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws, justifying its act in the following words:

For the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, John Crosby Brown, graduate of Columbia College in the class of 1859; Trustee of Columbia College since 1885; Trustee and Treasurer of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Trustee and Treasurer of the Charity Fund of the Chamber of Commerce; President of the Board of Trustees of Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York; a list of responsible positions that might easily be lengthened, yet sufficient to give warrant for a reputation by no means confined to his native city. Among his acquaintances known as a man of scholarly tastes and wide intellectual sympathies; a friend of the poor and oppressed at home and also in lands where no laws prevent oppression, Williams College adds its recognition of services to our common humanity which make him in no narrow sense a citizen of the world.

Among Mr. Brown's dominant interests the Christian church held the foremost place. As a young man he united with the Presbyterian Church in University Place, then under the pastorate of Dr. Potts. After his marriage his membership was transferred to the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, of which his father-in-law, Dr. William Adams, was the pastor, and in which he

was an elder for thirty-seven years. To his dying day he retained an affectionate interest in the little Reformed Church on Weehawken Heights, where his boyhood had been spent, now a prospering city church under the efficient leadership of the Reverend Mr. Gowen, and one of the last things which he did was to convey to the church the old homestead at Clifton and adjoining lots, to be used in the furtherance of its work. But Mr. Brown's chief interest in later years centred in the little Presbyterian Church at St. Cloud, on Orange Mountain, of which he was one of the founders, and where for many years he superintended the Sunday School. In all the concerns of this church Mr. Brown took an active part, and the interests which gathered about it, such as the Men's Club and the Fresh Air Work, will miss in him one of their most generous and faithful supporters. The latter indeed had its inception in the weekly gift of flowers that used to find its way to the city from Brighthurst, Mr. Brown's country home.

Mr. Brown early interested himself in the work of the Union Theological Seminary to which he was bound by many ties. His father had been a large benefactor of the Seminary, and his father-in-law, Dr. William Adams, was for seven years President of its Faculty. In 1866, before he was thirty, he became a Director. He succeeded William E. Dodge, as Vice President of its Board of Directors in 1883, and, on the death of the venerable President Charles Butler, LL.D., in 1897, he became the President. In the disagreement with the Presbyterian General Assembly over the transfer of Dr. Briggs, he was one of the group of firm friends of the

Seminary, to which Mr. James, Mr. William E. Dodge, Jr., and Mr. Jesup belonged, who maintained its position and re-established its influence. The plan for moving the Seminary to its new site near Riverside Drive had his heartiest approval, and he watched over it in every stage with untiring devotion. His last public appearance was at the laying of the corner-stone of the new buildings at One Hundred and Twentieth Street and Broadway, on November 17, 1908, and at the inauguration of the new President of the Faculty, Dr. Francis Brown, on the evening of the same day. On both occasions he performed the leading official acts. Until within a month of his death, even while confined to his house by advancing disease, Mr. Brown as chairman of the building committee still gave his closest attention to every detail of construction—a work for which he was specially fitted by his expert knowledge of building problems. The last lengthy conversation held by the writer with him, less than a week before he died, concerned the plans for the new buildings.

The spirit in which Mr. Brown conceived his relation to the Seminary may be learned from the words which he spoke in connection with the laying of the corner-stone for the new buildings, words which shed a reflex light upon his own character. They are these:

As the representative of the Board of Directors, I have been requested to lay the corner-stone of this group of buildings, the future home of the Union Theological Seminary, an institution founded in 1836 by godly men "to prepare young men for the service of Christ in the work of the ministry." Sharing with the Founders the belief that for all enduring religious work "other foundation can no man lay



than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," the Directors set apart this stone as the symbol of the spiritual foundation upon which this Seminary rests.

Mr. Brown was married on November 9, 1864, to Mary Elizabeth Adams, the daughter of the Reverend William Adams, D.D., LL.D., of New York, who, with six children, survives him. Two of these, Mr. James Crosby Brown, of Philadelphia, and Mr. Thatcher Magoun Brown, of New York, have followed him in the business and are now partners of Brown Brothers & Company. His eldest son, the present writer, is a Professor in the Union Theological Seminary. Two of his daughters married respectively the Reverend Edward Caldwell Moore, D.D., Ph.D., of Harvard University, and Mr. Henry Lockwood de Forest, of this city; and a third, Miss Mary Magoun Brown, received her training as a nurse at the Presbyterian Hospital, of which Mr. Brown was a Trustee.

Early in his married life Mr. Brown, who had previously spent his summers at Millbrook, Dutchess County, New York, made his home at Brighthurst on Orange Mountain, near the little village of St. Cloud, New Jersey. The place was his own creation, won back little by little from the primitive forest which had been previously in possession of the height. Here he welcomed his friends, taking delight in showing them the grounds with their wide expanse of view, their green lawns, shaded by the forest trees, the rose garden and the greenhouses, into which the owner put so much of his time and thought, the little log cabin, first designed as a playhouse for the children, but where afterward successive fresh-air parties

found welcome through a long series of years. Always an accomplished horseman,—an accomplishment which he had perfected in Liverpool, where he was accustomed to hunt every week—he was familiar with every road for miles around, and was never weary of pointing out each new beauty of flower or shrub, rippling brook or distant view, which the changing seasons revealed.

It was in this home, on Monday, June 28, 1909, a beautiful June day, when the roses were in their glory, that the family and household of Mr. Brown gathered to pay their last tribute of respect to his memory. The formal funeral service took place on the following day in the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, of New York City, the Reverend President Francis Brown, D.D., LL.D., of the Union Theological Seminary, and the Reverend Edward Caldwell Moore, D.D., Ph.D., of Harvard University, conducting the services. The interment was at Greenwood, in the family lot, where Mr. Brown's father and mother had been laid to rest before him.

Speaking of the death of his own father, Mr. James Brown, Mr. Brown writes: "It is difficult for a son to write of a father to whom from his earliest childhood he has looked up with affection, respect, and reverence, and with whom he has been associated in business for nearly twenty years. It is better to let others speak of his character, though the writer may well describe his personal appearance." The words express the feeling of the present writer. I seem to see again the sturdy form, the quick, alert step, with its curious swing from side to side, the mobile face with its frame of gray beard, the bright eyes with their quiet twinkle, suggestive of his

Irish ancestry, the broad forehead, the spectacles with their jointed frame, the general impression of a goodness that had no tinge of narrowness, and a gentleness that was rooted in strength. But what the man was like, of whom this was the outward part, I know not how to put into words, nor would this be the fitting place if I could.

Two or three characteristics which lay upon the surface will suggest themselves to all who knew him. They will think of his breadth of outlook, his abounding enthusiasm, the never-failing resources of his interest, the freshness and whole-heartedness with which he gave himself to each new claimant upon his attention and his sympathy. They will recall too his accuracy in details, the thoroughness of his mastery of each new problem which confronted him, his power of absorption and concentration, his unwearying perseverance. "If Wall Street ever failed Mr. Brown," said a contractor with whom he had been discussing a problem in construction on which they differed, "he would make a first-class master builder." Above all, they will associate with him a certain judicial quality of mind. He had trained himself to look at a question from every side and to give each argument its due weight, even when it bore against him. "I have known many honest men," said one who knew him well, "but few of whom it could be said that they had honest minds. Mr. Brown had an honest mind." He could see the other man's point of view and balance blame with praise as each was deserved. He was a natural leader of men and he won the confidence and affection of those whom he led, to an unusual degree.

These things, I repeat, lay upon the surface. No one

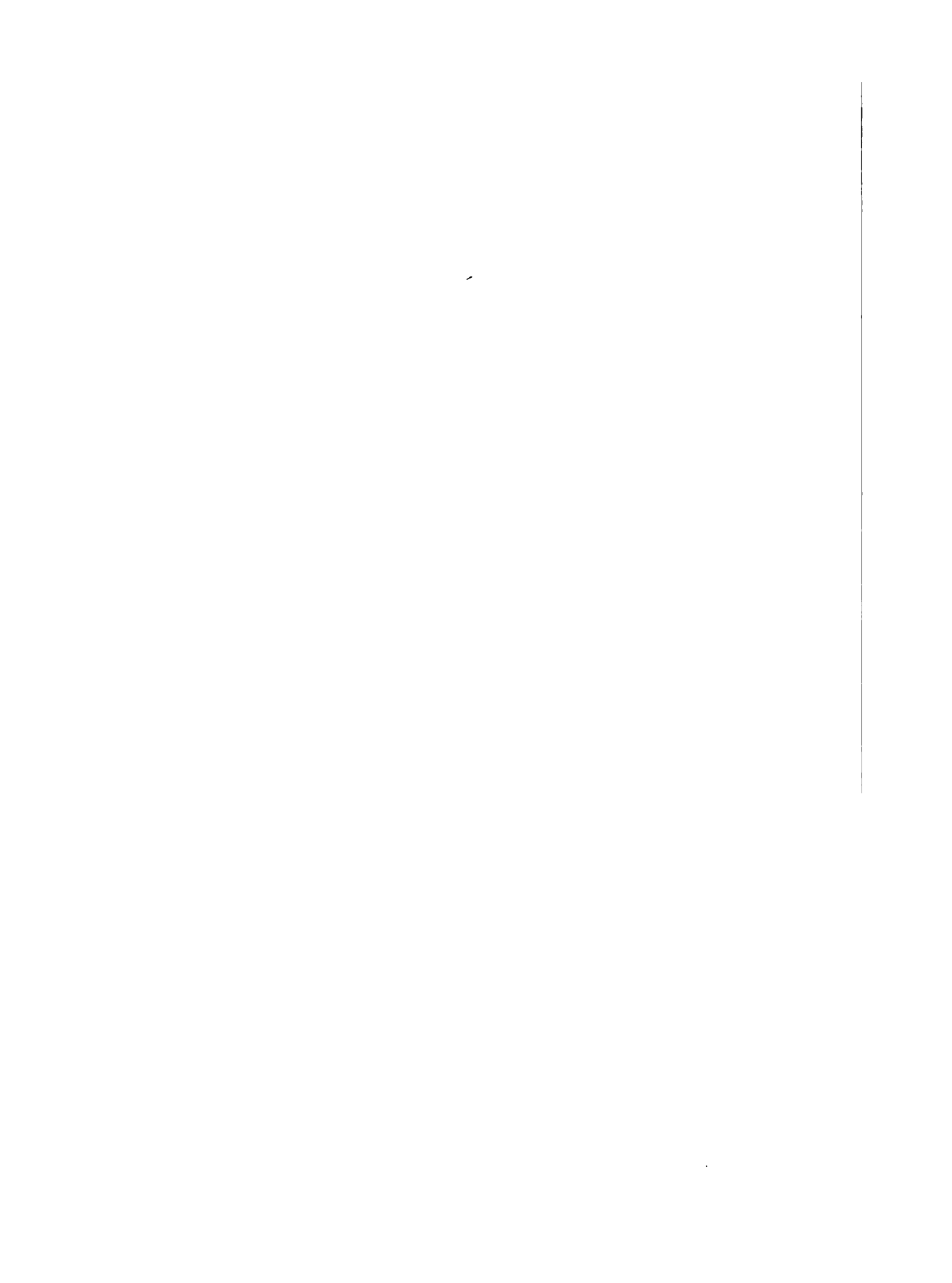
could touch Mr. Brown without discovering them, but there were reserves hidden from all but his intimates.

Some of those who read these lines will recall the view from Mr. Brown's summer home on Orange Mountain:—the wide expanse of fertile plain, with its thickly dotted houses seen through a fringe of trees, the dogwood in the glory of its spring white, or the russet oaks of autumn, and on the distant horizon, framing all, the great city with its myriads of homes, its ceaseless traffic, its unsleeping energy, its multitudinous lives. To me it has often seemed a picture of the man who lived there. His life was lived in the midst of men. He touched great interests and carried great responsibilities; yet there was always a breath of the mountain about him. He dealt with practical matters in a practical way; yet to each question he brought the wide outlook, the large sympathy, the unflinching principle, the childlike simplicity, which have their spring in the heart of the eternal.

WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN.



**BROWN BROTHERS AND COMPANY**



# **BROWN BROTHERS AND COMPANY**

## **CHAPTER I**

### **IRELAND**

#### **1764-1800. THE FOUNDER OF THE FIRM AND HOW THE BUSINESS BEGAN.**

**I**N attempting even a short sketch of the firm of Brown Brothers & Company, which began its career in New York in October, 1825, it is necessary to give some account of the houses which preceded it, and of which it was a part, and especially of the parent establishment in Baltimore, to which it and all its associate firms owe their origin.

Alexander Brown, the founder of the house, was born in Ballymena, County Antrim, in the north of Ireland, on November 17, 1764. Ballymena was situated at some distance from Belfast. It was celebrated for its bleaching greens, and was at that time and long after one of the centres of the manufacture of linen, the most important industry of that part of the country. We first hear of Alexander Brown as an auctioneer in the great linen market of Belfast, the principal town and chief port of the north of Ireland. It was situated at the bottom of Carrickfergus Bay, and in his day, had about eighteen thou-



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sand inhabitants, the majority of them of Scotch origin and connected with the Presbyterian Church. It was built principally of brick, and the streets were broad and straight. It had a thriving trade with Glasgow and Liverpool, with the West Indies and America.

A traveller through the British Empire, writing in 1804, says: "The country between Antrim and Belfast is mountainous, but the peasants are industrious and principally employed in the linen branch. There is scarcely a cottage without a loom. The town of Belfast is well built, and has a fine bridge of twenty-one arches, and a handsome linen hall where the market for cloth is held. This part of the country is the great seat of the linen manufacture; the bleach greens, covered with cloth as white as snow, have a singular effect."<sup>1</sup>

As no large factories existed, the various operations incident to the making of linen were carried on by families in their homes. In the village houses, and on the adjacent farms, linen was spun from flax. The yarn was sold by the spinners, bought by the weavers, and carried back into their homes to be woven into cloth. The cloth was sold either as unbleached linen for home consumption or export, or to the bleachers, who, in turn, after bleaching it in the open air on the grass, brought it back for sale as white goods. The products were sold at auction, from the tails of the farmers' carts, in the great paved square of Belfast on stated days of the week, or in the "linen hall" above mentioned.

During the season a good linen auctioneer was kept

<sup>1</sup> "A Family Tour Through the British Empire," by Priscilla Wakefield, Philadelphia, 1804.



**Mr. Alexander Brown**

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busy, and none had a better reputation than Alexander Brown. Long before 1798 he was a well-known figure, with a good clientèle and with many warm friends among both buyers and sellers. Of his ancestors we know but little. The family came of that hardy North Irish stock which is so numerous and honorably represented in the United States by men who have achieved distinction in business, in the learned professions, and in political life. His father, William Brown, was born in 1715 at Carrickorin,<sup>1</sup> County Antrim, and married Margaret Davison on November 19, 1745. Four of their children, three sons and a daughter named Rose, lived to maturity.<sup>2</sup> The eldest son, Patrick, born the 21st of July, 1753, settled in London as an insurance broker. His name caused him so much annoyance that he changed it to John, probably in the hope of improving his business. The youngest, Stewart, born July 2, 1769, left the old country and settled in Baltimore in 1796. He became a partner in the firm of Falls and Brown, who were in business as general merchants in the neighboring city of Philadelphia. This firm removed to Baltimore in 1797 and continued there in business until 1798.

Of Alexander Brown's early years no authentic records remain, and unfortunately no one of the sons who afterward became his associates in business has left any written record of his early life; so that for our scanty knowl-

<sup>1</sup> "Burke's Peerage" gives Cairnkin.

<sup>2</sup> "Burke's Peerage" makes mention of only five children (of whom one died in infancy), but a genealogical table in the family of Stewart Brown, one of the sons, mentions also six girls and seven boys who all died young. This statement is confirmed by a memorandum found among the papers of Mr. John A. Brown, of Philadelphia, Alexander Brown's son.

edge of his business career and of the reasons which led him to leave Ireland and settle in Baltimore we are dependent upon his grandsons, who treasured as precious memories stories of those days as they fell from the lips of their fathers. It appears that while Mr. Brown's chief business was that of an auctioneer, he also traded on his own account; for we find that as early as 1796, Falls and Brown in Philadelphia received consignments of linen from Alexander Brown and accounted to him for their proceeds.

On November 17, 1783, Alexander Brown married Grace, daughter of John Davison, of Drumnasole. They had seven children, three of whom, two sons and a daughter, died in infancy. Four sons grew to manhood:

William, born May 30, 1784,  
George, born April 17, 1787,  
John, born May 21, 1788,<sup>1</sup>  
James, born February 4, 1791.

They became his associates in business, and all lived to an advanced age.

In childhood these boys were a source of great anxiety to the home circle, and especially to their mother, who was evidently a woman of strong character, ambitious that her sons should do well in the world. With the other village lads they attended the dame's school; but they made slow progress with their ABC's. The old dame complained that they were the most stupid and stubborn

<sup>1</sup> Letters addressed to him were continually received by another John Brown and, to avoid this complication, he added the letter "A" for a middle name, and was thereafter known as "John A. Brown."

boys she had ever seen: "she had wholopped them and wholopped them, and they would not learn their letters." An aunt to whom the anxious mother was telling this sad tale remarked, after watching the culprits at play, "Those boys do not seem to me stupid." She suggested that their eyes should be examined, as they might not see distinctly. A visit to the oculist proved more effective than the "wholoppings" of the dame, and there were no more complaints of dulness after that. To the end of their lives, however, the four brothers suffered from weak sight. The peculiarity of vision with which they were affected is one easily corrected to-day. It has been transmitted to their descendants of the third and fourth generation; and, before the discovery of the ophthalmoscope, was often spoken of by oculists in New York as the "Brown sight."

I recall several anecdotes told by my father, James Brown, with a merry twinkle in his eye, about his childhood in the old home at Ballymena. He and his brothers were paid a certain price per thousand for making tallow dips for the family use. A bundle of wick was given to the boys, who cut it into proper lengths and inserted the strips through the candle moulds into which hot tallow was poured. Adjoining their house was an old granary or attic which my father and his brothers discovered to be full of bran. Early one morning the lads carried thither some empty bottles and spent a delightful day filling the bottles with bran and emptying them again. When at the expected time they did not return, search was made for them, but they could not be found. Resort was then had to the bellman, that public functionary whose duty it was to call attention to lost articles, strayed animals, or

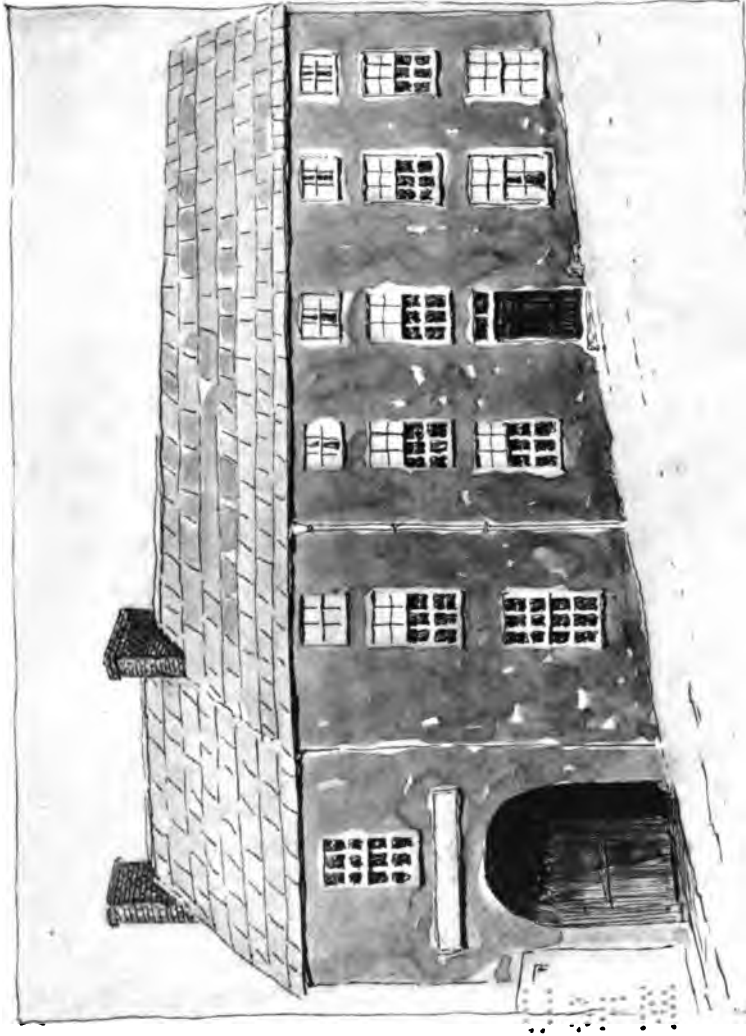
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missing children; but even his services were unavailing. At the end of the day, however, the boys had tired themselves out with their bran bottles, and returned home of their own accord, quite unconscious of the commotion they had been causing.

During 1798, political troubles arose between England and Ireland which resulted in the emigration from the latter country of some of our most valuable citizens. At this time, Alexander Brown was, for an unknown reason, obliged to keep himself in hiding. While he was absent from home some local disturbance occurred, and his boys, or, at least, the younger ones, were hurriedly removed by a friendly barber and secreted in a neighboring village. When the trouble was over, their father returned; but so dissatisfied was he with the conduct of the English government in its management of Irish affairs that he determined to abandon his old home and to settle in the United States. It did not seem to him that the Ireland of his day offered suitable opportunities for starting in life a family of growing boys.

Leaving his younger sons, George, John and James, at school with the Reverend J. Bradley at Catterick, near Richmond, in Yorkshire, England, where his eldest son, William, had received his education, he sailed with his wife and eldest son, then a lad of sixteen, and landed in Baltimore in the autumn of 1800.<sup>1</sup> The school at which the younger lads were left was probably a good school for those days; but the master seems to have had an eye to his pocket. He used to tell the boys that the more pud-

<sup>1</sup> It is possible that Alexander Brown may have come to Baltimore in 1798, on a visit to his relatives, before actually deciding to make his home there.



The Old House at Ballymena



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ding they ate the more beef they could have. Now, as pudding was cheaper than beef, more filling and more toothsome to the boys, the butcher's bill for the school was undoubtedly diminished by this arrangement.

In 1802 the younger boys rejoined their parents in Baltimore. They landed on a hot Sunday morning in July, dressed in thick woolen Irish suits and heavy plaid stockings, and created quite a sensation among the good people of Baltimore, quietly wending their way to church. Thither their mother took them also, with a heart thankful for their safe arrival, after she had borrowed from her neighbors thinner clothing better suited to the American climate.

## CHAPTER II

### BALTIMORE

1800-1839. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ALEXANDER BROWN IN BALTIMORE.  
EARLY YEARS. ALEXANDER BROWN & SON. ALEXANDER BROWN  
& SONS. SHIPPING INTERESTS. ALEXANDER BROWN.

**B**EFORE continuing the story of the growth and development of the Baltimore firm, it may be well to ascertain why Alexander Brown selected Baltimore for his home, rather than any other city in the New World, particularly as its selection had so marked a bearing upon the character of the transactions of the firm in those early days, and the prominence of the present houses in certain lines of international business. No doubt family reasons had something to do with the choice. In addition to the presence in Baltimore of his brother Stewart, his brother-in-law, Dr. George Brown, had settled there in 1783. Although not related by blood, he had married a sister of Alexander Brown's wife, and a warm friendship existed between the two men. Settling in Baltimore meant, therefore, going to live among friends. But in addition to these personal considerations, there were other good reasons for the choice. Alexander Brown's shrewdness was never better illustrated than in the selection of his home in the New World. At the opening of the century, before the

great development of the growth and manufacture of cotton, cotton goods were not the great staple which they afterward became. Linen goods of the better quality were more prized and more used than cotton fabrics. Fabrics of linen were stronger and more durable than cotton goods of similar grades, and were more largely used for the clothing of the Southern people. While, of course, linen goods were shipped from the old country to the Northern ports, Baltimore and Charleston, from their proximity to Virginia and the Carolinas, and the shortness of the land carriage to the interior, became important centres for the distribution of heavy goods. These facts, reinforced by the family considerations alluded to above, as well as his business connections established before leaving Ballymena with both Philadelphia and Baltimore, fixed Alexander Brown's choice on Baltimore for his home. It brings into prominence one of the cardinal maxims of his business life, "Shoemaker, stick to your last;" a maxim he never tired of repeating to his sons. He understood the linen trade thoroughly in all its branches. In beginning his career in the new world, he instinctively turned to the city and the line of business in which his past experiences and training could be most effectively used. Success followed his wise choice.

At the time of Alexander Brown's arrival in America, Baltimore, though one of the principal cities of the country, was a small place, according to modern standards. Its inhabitants in 1800 numbered 26,514, of whom 2,843 were slaves. Belfast and Liverpool, the cities with which Alexander Brown was familiar, numbered at that time about 18,500 and 75,000, respectively. As there exists no

account of the impressions received by Alexander Brown upon his arrival in Baltimore, it is interesting to learn how the city appeared to travellers from the Old World at about the same time.

An English writer, named Isaac Weld,<sup>1</sup> who, in 1807, published a book of "Travels Through the States of North America," describes Baltimore as a town peopled by plain and respectable merchants, without a public library and entirely lacking distinction in its outward appearance. The only public building which he finds worthy of mention is the newly erected Presbyterian church, the handsomest building in the town, built of brick, with six stone pillars supporting the portico. Other less pretentious places of worship existed, to the number of nine, and these ministered to the wants of the Episcopalians, German Lutherans, German Calvinists, Reformed Germans, Nicolites or New Quakers, Baptists, Roman Catholics and Methodists. He tells us that though some of the houses in the new streets were of brick, those on the outskirts were of wood. They were in general small, heavy and inconvenient. The principal merchants of Baltimore were Irish, fellow-countrymen of Alexander Brown, but there was present also a strong French element which had entered Baltimore from France and the West Indies after the war, and there were many English and Scotch residents. The people were sociable among themselves, and very friendly and hospitable toward strangers. Cards and dancing were favorite amusements both in private and in public assemblies, which latter were held

<sup>1</sup> "Travels Through the States of North America, 1795, 1796, and 1797," by Isaac Weld, Jr. London, 1807.

every fortnight. He notes the almost universal use of bank notes issued by the three incorporated banks of the town, some of them for sums as small as one dollar, and the unpopularity of silver. "As for gold," he writes, "it is very scarce. I hardly ever met with it during the two months I remained in Maryland." He mentions that Baltimore, like Philadelphia, had suffered from the ravages of yellow fever; that during the autumn it was generally unhealthy, and that those who could afford it were accustomed to retire at that time to country seats in the neighborhood, some of which were delightfully situated.

Some years later a much more enthusiastic description is given us by one John Melish, who published in Philadelphia his account of his travels in the United States of America.<sup>1</sup> Baltimore had evidently made rapid progress in the interval. The writer says:

We arrived at Baltimore at six o'clock in the morning. Having taken lodgings at Evan's Tavern, I called on a friend to whom I had a letter of introduction, and he politely offered his services to facilitate my inquiries at Baltimore. On my return to the tavern for breakfast, I was astounded to see the number of well-dressed men who sat down to table, amounting to about 80, and I was told the number was seldom under 40 or 50. This is partly accounted for by Baltimore being the great thoroughfare between the Northern and Southern States; and the number of people passing to and fro on business and pleasure is immense. . . . The whole city exhibits a very handsome appearance, and the country round abounds in villas, gardens, and well cultivated fields. At the commencement of the American war it was but an inconsiderable village; but such has been the rapidity of its growth that it is now the fourth commercial city in the United States. It contains

<sup>1</sup> "Travels in the United States of America in the Years 1806 and 1807 and 1809, 1810 and 1811," by John Melish. Philadelphia, 1812.

upwards of 6000 dwelling-houses. . . . The houses are mostly built of brick, and many of them are elegant! The principal public buildings are thirteen places of public worship, a court-house, a hall, three market-houses, a poor-house, the exchange, theatre, observatory, assembly-rooms and library. The manufactures of Baltimore are considerable, and consist chiefly of ships, cordage, iron utensils, paper, saddlery, boots and shoes, hats, wool and cotton cards, etc. In the adjoining country there are numerous mills, furnaces and forges, which contribute much to the trade of the city. . . . A great portion of the imports are manufactured goods from Britain, and, having the supply of an immense back country, this is an increasing trade. . . . The trade of Baltimore is facilitated by three banks, all having ample capital. One is a branch of the bank of the United States. . . .

Accompanied by my friend, I went to see the *market-house*, which is handsomely fitted up, and well supplied with provisions: the prices, I was told, were reasonable, and nearly the same as at Philadelphia. From thence we went to the coffee-house. . . . The coffee-house is small, but commodious, and is well supplied with newspapers from every part of the United States. From the coffee-house we went to the library, which contains a very excellent collection of books, and is under good management. The annual subscription is four dollars.

In the afternoon I went to view the ship-yards, and saw a three-masted schooner launched. I was informed that a great many of these vessels are built in Baltimore, and that they are reckoned the fastest sailing vessels in the United States. . . .

The affairs of the city are under the management of a city council, consisting of two branches, and a mayor. The police seem to be under good regulations, and the streets are kept very clean, which secures good health to the citizens. Education is pretty well attended to, and the citizens are said to be hospitable and industrious. The men rank as correct men of business; and as to the ladies, I saw but little of them, and can only say in the language of the Quaker, "they look well."

Soon after his arrival in Baltimore, Alexander Brown, who brought with him a small capital, began business as

an importer of Irish linens and other goods. Under date of December 20, 1800, the following advertisement appeared in the "Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser:"

IRISH LINEN WAREHOUSE,  
No. 12 North Gay Street.

The Subscriber, lately arrived from Ireland, has brought with him a most complete assortment of 4-4 & 7-8 wide Irish Linen, which upon examination, will be found much lower than any inspected for three years past, and which will be sold low by the box or piece for cash or good acceptance in the city on the usual credit.

ALEXANDER BROWN.

N. B.—He has also imported and for sale three dozen very nice Mahogany Hair Bottom Chairs made on the very best construction, and 4 8-day clocks, which will be sold very low.

*December 19th, 1800.*

From the beginning he was doubtless assisted in his business by his eldest son, but it would seem that he had great difficulty in finding suitable employment for his other boys. In an old letter he speaks of having put his son George in a grocery store in 1803. He says: "I really find great difficulty in placing my own boys in situations to my mind; and the difficulty arises partly from the weakness of their sight. George I have put in the grocery business, thinking it might answer weak sight better than any other. John I have taken from school, and do not know what to do with him; his eyes are so extremely weak, that it is with the greatest difficulty he can read, and that very indifferently, although George's eyes and his *look* quite straight and good. James's sight is stronger." In 1806 he appears to have taken his son George into his own



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office, for there is an entry in an old day-book crediting George Brown with one year's salary, \$200.

From 1800 to 1805, the business was carried on under his own name, but on the 3d of September, 1805, his eldest son, William, became his partner, and the following advertisement announcing the formation of the firm of Alexander Brown & Son appeared in the "Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser" on that same day:

ALEXANDER BROWN

Having taken his son, William Brown, into partnership, their commercial business will in future be conducted under the firm of

ALEXANDER BROWN & SON

Who have received by the *Ceres*, 4-4, & 7-8, & 3-4 Irish Linen, and Brown Holland entitled to drawback.

On December 31 of the same year, in the "Baltimore American Commercial Daily Advertiser," we also find the following advertisement:

IRISH LINENS

ALEXANDER BROWN & SON

Have just received per ship *Birmingham* a general assortment of linens, etc.

IRISH LINEN WAREHOUSE, 8 Calvert Street.

I remember hearing my father say that at first Alexander Brown had his home over his office, but whether in Gay Street or Calvert Street I do not know. It is also certain that at a very early date his office was at the corner of Baltimore and Calvert Streets, on the premises occu-

pied, until the fire in Baltimore in 1904, by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company, opposite the site now occupied by Alexander Brown & Sons.

From 1805 to the end of 1809, the firm name continued to be Alexander Brown & Son, although from entries in an old book of private accounts it would appear that the second son, George, became a partner in 1808. It was, however, not till 1810 that the firm name was changed to Alexander Brown & Sons, when the third son, John, became a partner to take the place of the eldest brother, William, who, owing to ill-health, had left Baltimore in 1809 for a visit to relatives in Ireland, and in 1810 established himself in business in Liverpool with his cousin William A. Brown, son of John Brown, of London, as his partner, under the firm name of William Brown & Company. He thereupon ceased to be interested in the Baltimore firm, and did not resume his connection for several years. In 1811 the youngest son, James, became a partner, and the business was carried on by the father and the three younger sons until the end of 1814. In 1815 William again became a partner, though still residing in Liverpool.

In the account of these early times I must include a brief mention of the silent partner of the firm, one whose name nowhere appears among its members, but who was kept thoroughly informed of its business, and whose sound judgment in every grave crisis was always acknowledged by husband and sons. Life was simpler in those days. The home and store or office were connected, often in the same building. Father and sons used to talk over their business ventures in the evening with the wife and mother, and on many a knotty question an appeal was often

taken to the mother's shrewd common-sense. One special incident is stamped upon my memory, for I have so often heard my father recount it, with just a bit of the Irish brogue which came to him naturally when speaking of old days. It was at the time of a financial crisis, when men's hearts failed them from fear, and no one knew whom to trust. There was the usual family conclave, and one of the sons walked up and down the room in great excitement, bewailing present conditions, and fearful of impending ruin. The good lady drew herself up in her chair, assumed the air of dignity which in a little woman is so striking that it commands immediate attention, and, turning upon the excited young man, exclaimed with withering scorn: "I should be ashamed if any son of mine were not man enough to bear misfortune, when it comes." The effect was instantaneous. There was no more lamentation in that household, but instead, calm and careful deliberation as to the means of averting the impending calamity, which, after all, never came.

The development of the business of Alexander Brown & Sons in Baltimore tells the story of the growth of trade between the Old World and the New. Starting out chiefly as importers of linens, they soon added other lines of goods.<sup>1</sup> Imported goods had to be paid for in sterling. From old records it appears that the firm rendered their accounts for imported goods in sterling, and accepted payment in a sterling bill on England or its equivalent in

<sup>1</sup> From 1800 to 1818, Alexander Brown & Sons had almost a monopoly of the linen trade in Baltimore. After the War of 1812, the profits of the linen trade were large, but from 1819 to 1821 competition seriously affected their business, and led them to turn their attention to other sources of revenue.



Mrs. Alexander Brown

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dollars. These sterling bills were to be had in Baltimore in fair amounts, drawn against shipments of tobacco and other produce to Great Britain, but at times when the supply was limited, tobacco and other produce was bought and shipped to Liverpool by Alexander Brown & Sons for sale there. Few merchants in Baltimore were sufficiently well acquainted with the standing of the drawees to take the risk of buying commercial bills on Great Britain, but Alexander Brown's wide acquaintance with British merchants, acquired on the Belfast auction market, gave him an immense advantage which he was quick to seize. He was not only able to supply his own wants, but so many good bills were often offered, drawn against shipments of produce with bills of lading attached, that he at once became a free buyer of commercial sterling, covering his purchases by selling his own drafts on Liverpool. He was so well and favorably known in Baltimore, that importers in that city felt no hesitation in buying his bills on Great Britain, especially after 1810, when his son William had established himself in Liverpool, and these bills were drawn upon his son's firm. This, in the opinion of the buyers, insured their acceptance and payment. His good credit in Baltimore and his accurate knowledge of the standing of mercantile firms in Great Britain, unusual at that time, and the fact that he had, through the establishment of his eldest son in business in Liverpool, the means of acquiring the latest information, enabled him to build up at an early date, and retain for a long time, a goodly share of the Sterling Exchange business of this country, and gave to the bills of the associated firms their currency in the markets of the world.

Produce consigned to and goods imported from Great Britain were necessarily carried in ships, and Alexander Brown at an early date became interested as owner or part owner in vessels plying between Baltimore and Liverpool. His ownership thus controlled the consignment of the vessels, and in many cases their cargoes, to his own firm in Baltimore and his son's firm in Liverpool. As early as 1812 we find from Alexander Brown's letter to his son George in Liverpool that he was owner of the ship *Armata*, and this is confirmed by the records of the custom house in Baltimore. Subsequently he and his sons became owners or part owners of a number of other vessels. These vessels were about four hundred tons custom-house measurement, and sailed to and from Liverpool, Baltimore, and other ports, as full cargoes were obtained. Some of them were noted for their quick trips, but they are not to be identified with the real clipper ships, which were not built until after 1848.<sup>1</sup>

Again, merchants in Baltimore, Richmond, and the neighborhood, who wished to import goods from abroad, but who were not sufficiently well known in Great Britain to make direct purchases, applied to Alexander Brown & Sons for credits on his son's Liverpool firm, the sellers of the goods receiving payment for the same in the Liverpool firm's acceptances of their drafts at four to six months' sight, against the goods to be shipped by that firm consigned to Alexander Brown & Sons, who delivered them to the importer on arrival, on payment or on

<sup>1</sup> Models of the *Grace Brown*, the *Pocahontas*, the *Powhatan*, the *George Brown*, the *Alexander*, the *Leila*, and a seventh ship that bears no name are still in the possession of the Baltimore office.

credit, as the case might be. From the beginning, therefore, the firm, besides being importers on their own account, dealers in Sterling Exchange, and ship owners, issued credits for the importation of goods by others and were known as merchant bankers, a designation which they still bear in London.

In addition to the business centring in Baltimore from Maryland and Virginia, the city also enjoyed a considerable trade with the west brought by wagons over the turnpike road from Wheeling. Boats brought produce from the settlements along the Ohio River to Wheeling, and from that town it was transported overland to Baltimore, which was the nearest seaport city to the Ohio River engaged in the foreign trade. Western merchants made their purchases here, and transported back to Wheeling by wagon light goods and those needed at once, shipping heavy goods by vessel to New Orleans and thence up the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers by boat.

After the War of 1812-15, the construction of canals in the states of Pennsylvania and New York led to the concentration and growth of business in Philadelphia and New York. Customers of the firm, from Maryland and Virginia and also from the West, who had been in the habit of buying goods in Baltimore, found that they could do better by purchasing certain classes of goods—mainly manufactures of iron—in Philadelphia, and to keep control of their business a branch house was established in Philadelphia in 1818, under the firm name of John A. Brown & Company, Alexander Brown's third son, John, being sent there to open the house.

The development of manufacturing industries in the



New England states and the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 made New York, with its magnificent harbor, the centre of the export and import trade of the country. It therefore became necessary for the firm to establish a branch house in New York, and toward the end of 1825 James, the youngest son, was sent there, and in October of that year opened a branch of the firm in temporary quarters at 191 Pearl Street under the name of Brown Brothers & Company. They subsequently moved to 63 Pine Street.

At that time Baltimore was a city of about 70,000 inhabitants, and the loss of its western trade was a source of great anxiety to its merchants. Alexander Brown and his son George had the sagacity to perceive that some action was necessary if Baltimore was to retain its hold on the western trade. After a careful study of the whole situation a meeting of twenty-five leading citizens was called at the residence of Mr. George Brown on February 12, 1827, "to take into consideration the best means of restoring to the city of Baltimore that portion of the western trade that has been lately diverted from it by the introduction of steam navigation and by other causes." At this meeting one of the boldest of business enterprises was inaugurated. There was then, with the exception of the Stockton & Darlington Railroad in England, which was built mainly for the transportation of minerals and was originally propelled by horse power, but one railroad of any importance in the whole world, the Manchester and Liverpool Railroad. The steam locomotive was still untested, and yet the business men of Baltimore, in order to retain their trade, incorporated the Baltimore & Ohio



Mr George Brown

#noj

Railroad Company, with a capital stock of \$5,000,000, to build a "double railroad" to the Ohio River over the Allegheny Mountains. Not only was the method of propulsion all unsettled, but the various processes of railroad construction and the necessary appliances had to be invented and were invented during the progress of the work.

George Brown, Alexander Brown's son, became the first treasurer and afterward one of the directors for the State, and it was said by his associates that, but for his active exertions in its behalf, the friends of the road would on several occasions have despaired of its success.

My father used often to tell an amusing story in connection with the opening of the railroad. A gentleman in Baltimore who had a famous white trotting horse made a wager that his horse could beat "that old black machine." The line of the road ran for about ten or twelve miles parallel with the turnpike. The wager was accepted and a day was set for the trial. There was a large concourse of people present to witness the result, and the horse won.

While the four brothers were partners, interested both in the American and Liverpool houses, Alexander Brown, Senior, was never a partner in the Liverpool firm, but in the American houses alone.

During his lifetime, however, Baltimore continued to be the headquarters of all the houses, and several times a year, and on every important occasion, it was the custom of all the brothers in this country to meet together to take counsel with their father and with one another. When the two younger sons left Baltimore and founded the Philadelphia and New York houses in 1818 and 1825, respec-

tively, the same spirit of mutual confidence continued. The old Latin motto on the family crest, "Est concordia fratrum," expresses the relationship which was maintained between father, sons and brothers. Whatever business any partner undertook, it was taken for granted that the intention was to do the best for the common interest, whether it resulted well or ill. During the long years of their business career they never had a serious difference, and this mutual confidence was one of the main causes of their early success. The business of the firm in the early days was a purely family affair. The father and four sons were the only partners, and when in later years the growth of the business required additional help, the junior partners taken in were usually relatives, trained in the different houses.

Alexander Brown died suddenly on April 4, 1834, of pneumonia contracted at a meeting of merchants over which he presided, held at the Exchange on a cold day during a panic which was occasioned by the failure of the Bank of Maryland. With reference to that panic, Mr. Brown is known to have declared, with his characteristic decision and energy, that no merchant in Baltimore who could show that he was solvent should be permitted to fail, but his sudden death prevented the arrangements which he would undoubtedly have completed to mitigate the catastrophe. An editorial in the "Baltimore American," of April 4, 1834, refers to him in the following paragraphs:

In the death of Alexander Brown, Esq., the head of the well-known mercantile firm of Alexander Brown & Sons, a venerable and much regretted citizen has been removed from among us.

Few men occupy so large a space in the esteem of a whole community as the deceased. As a merchant he stood in the first rank for ample means and the skill and enterprise with which his large concerns were managed. His energy was not more remarkable than the liberality of spirit which marked all his undertakings and diffused widely among others the benefits of his successful trade. In his social relations the same enlarged feelings made him always prominent in sustaining works of public utility, and forward in encouraging all charitable and philanthropic associations.

As a citizen he was eminently valuable, and his loss is a subject of universal regret.

Not less esteemable in his private relations, to his family and personal friends this bereavement is an afflicting dispensation.

It is said that Mr. Brown's early education had been defective, but he was a man of great vigor both of mind and body, quick in perceiving and deciding, as well as in executing, of strong will, sound judgment, inflexible honesty, and untiring industry. In cases of doubt and difficulty his voice generally decided the question, and rarely, if ever, has a family, consisting of father and four sons, worked together for so long a time and with such admirable harmony and efficiency, or better illustrated the familiar maxim that in union, and especially in family union, there is strength.

After the opening of the Philadelphia and New York houses in 1818 and 1825 respectively, by John A. and James Brown, George Brown remained in Baltimore with his father, as his only partner, interested, however, in the Philadelphia, New York, and Liverpool firms until 1839. After the establishment of the Philadelphia and New York houses, the volume of business of the Baltimore house gradually declined, as the foreign trade of the coun-

try became more and more concentrated first in Philadelphia and New York, and later in New York.

In 1836, Herman H. Perry, who had previously occupied a confidential position in the Baltimore house, became a partner, interested only in the business in Baltimore until 1837, when he appears also to have had an interest in the Liverpool business. It is possible that in 1837, 1838 and 1839 he may have been a general partner in all of the American houses as well. He appears to have ceased his connection with the firm after 1839, but remained somewhat longer with the Baltimore house after George Brown's retirement from the other American and Liverpool houses at the end of 1839, and in 1852 he received power of attorney from the New York house to represent them in Baltimore, as will appear hereafter.

## CHAPTER III

### BALTIMORE—*Continued*

1812-1835. CORRESPONDENCE. THE WAR OF 1812.

A VIVID picture of the state of the public mind in Baltimore before war with England was declared by President Madison on June 12, 1812, and thereafter during the progress of the war, and an interesting account of the difficulties affecting merchants in those uncertain times are given in letters written by Alexander Brown<sup>1</sup> to his sons George and John, by William Brown to his cousin and partner in Liverpool, William A. Brown, and by Alexander Brown & Sons to William Cumming, their correspondent in Savannah. Numerous extracts from this correspondence follow, from which it appears that George returned to Baltimore in 1813, but John remained abroad until near the close of the war, and on his return was captured and carried into one of the West India ports, where he stayed until peace was declared.<sup>2</sup>

Characteristic of the correspondence between father and sons are the bits of family news interspersed among accounts of business transactions. These occur even in

<sup>1</sup> It is characteristic of Mr. Brown's methods that he often signed his personal letters with the firm name.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf.* letter to John A. Brown, May 7, 1813, p. 38.



letters written over the firm signature. It is amusing to notice how in one sentence mention is made of the effect of large shipments on the rate of exchange, and in the next a piece of family news is given, or some question is asked about a purely personal matter. This peculiarity is even more noticeable in the Philadelphia correspondence given in a succeeding chapter.

BALTIMORE, 24 Mar, 1812.

MR. GEO. BROWN.

DEAR GEORGE: I am in receipt of your favours up to No. 6 dated 10 Jan'y, and think it's as well you did not invest more money in goods. The opening of the Intercourse seems as doubtful as ever. The majority of the people say unless the orders in Council are off we must have War. For my part I think it impossible our government can be so mad as to declare War until they are prepared to make it. It's impossible to give you any decided opinion what is likely to be the result of the present order of things. You would be surprised to find the Ship *Armata* arriving in Lpool our property. She must be a very cheap Ship if we have peace. If the orders in Council should be off, so that a good f.<sup>1</sup> is got back to this country, she will cost us very little. If she should even return in ballast her outward f. will reduce her price to about \$21,000. John left letters in N York to be forwarded, directing her, if the orders in Council were not off, to return with all possible dispatch to Hampton Roads and to send up to Norfolk to Wood & Hastings where we would have orders waiting for her where to proceed. Since then immense shipments of flour and corn have gone from this port to Spain and Portugal which has scarcely left a ship in port for charter. I think the chances of getting a good f. from this port immediately on arrival so good that you had better direct Captain Leeds if the wind answers to proceed up here without stopping. Should the wind not answer then there would be no great loss of time. He may stop and send up to Norfolk. I hope however unless there is a prospect of a return f. that she will have

<sup>1</sup> f. is used here and in subsequent letters as an abbreviation for freight.

sailed before you receive this. With respect to your remaining in Europe until we see what's to be done, can form a better judgment some time hence. In the meantime if you can be conveniently spared fm Lpool, I think it would be well to go over about June to see your friends in Ireland and to return to Liverpool in July or in August to be ready to embrace any view of business that may offer, either by opening the Intercourse or otherwise. William will probably leave this for England in May or June so that you will meet him on your return to Lpool

ALEX. BROWN & SONS.

BALTIMORE, 2 Apl, 1812.

MR. WILLIAM A. BROWN.

DEAR WILLIAM: I wrote you yesterday and send this down to Annapolis [so] that, should the *Glennier* be ordered off in a hurry, it may be there to catch her. To-day we have positive accounts that the two houses of Congress sat yesterday with closed doors in consequence of a message from the President of the U. S. There is good ground for supposing the measure in agitation was the propriety of laying an immediate Embargo, and it is believed that it was carried in the lower house by a majority of 70 to 50. What its fate will be in the Senate we are at a loss to know. For the last 10 days very great activity has prevailed in this port in getting vessels off by working night and day, and now there is a fleet beating down the River against a head wind for fear of our Government keeping them at home. It is impossible to conjecture what is to follow an Embargo, but it's highly probable it will cause a good deal of Speculation in Lpool, and may enable us to run off the ordinary Tobacco. With respect to the other sales I am quite at a loss what to say—you must act as you think best, it is most difficult to know what to do. If War, produce will rise, if peace, the reverse may take place. It is said the Embargo will be laid on for 60 days only, and some conjecture that a removal of the non importation act will follow. I write by several conveyances that you may be on a footing with others and to prevent your being speculated on, yet am of opinion that unless you see from the attitude England is assuming that she means to commence the War the U. S. will not strike the

first blow. With all the noise and threatening of this Government, I do not believe that the Executive has any serious intentions of going to War, if they can avoid it. But from the manner in which they have committed themselves, it may be forced upon them contrary to their wish. I hope the *Anacreon* will get off. I do not know but if the prices of Tobacco get up from 9 to 10d for leaf and 11 to 12d for stem'd it would be desirable to sell freely as far as A. B & S are interested. As respects other consignments you will attend to the instructions of the shippers. It has occurred to me that if you see War is likely to take place a British license can be got for the *Armata* to carry provisions to Cadiz or Lisbon or Naval Stores and Cotton to Lpool with the liberty to retain her American papers. If so it would be desirable to send out a license with all dispatch. You can consult George on this subject. The following is the description of the *Armata*.

The *Armata* of Baltimore was built in New York in the years 1810 and 1811, has two decks, three masts, her length is 108 f., her breadth 29 f. 6 in., her depth 14 f. 9 in. and measures 413 56-95 Tons, has a round tuck, square stern'd Ship, with a billet head.

Yours,

WM. BROWN.

BALTIMORE, 7 April, 1812.

DEAR GEORGE:

William has wrote you by this conveyance that an Embargo has been laid for 90 days. Some think it will be followed by War. Many, however, are of the opinion that the Non-importation law will be repealed to give the Americans an opportunity of getting home their funds. I cannot help having considerable hopes this will be the course that will be taken previous to hostilities, even if they should be determined on. I still think it impossible our Executive can have any serious intention of going to War with England, in the unprepared state of this country, and particularly so, as we are equally ill treated by France as respects capturing and burning American Ships. If the Non importation act is removed, the orders for coarse goods suitable for this fall trade will be immense and they will get up rapidly in England. I should think it a safe and good speculation for you on

rec. of this to have Three or Four Thousand Pounds invested in those articles. If the intercourse should be opened when that news reaches England, it will be impossible to procure the goods, so many will be wanted. . . .

Your aff. Father,

A. BROWN.

P. S.—There is to be a meeting this evening to petition Congress to take off the Non importation law.

BALTIMORE, 18th *April*, 1812.

MR. WILLIAM BROWN.<sup>1</sup>

*Dear Sir:* I do not find there is any difficulty in getting little things ashore here, altho there appears to be in New York. M. Bings therefore wishes you to send him per *Rising Sun*—One End or p<sup>s</sup> p. fine London cloth, black—One d<sup>o</sup> Best Quality Pantaloon Stuff, Ten Dozen Ale, Ten Dozen Porter, Three Cheeses, Three Kegs Herrings, One Crate Blue and White Staffordshire Ware, Dishes, Plates, Basons, Chambers, &c—for M. Bings' own use of the best, and one of common Ware for Ship's use. If anything opens the Intercourse, send double quantity of all but the two first mentioned articles but don't run the risk of getting the Ship seized. George might send Mr. Smith's gold scales, and my Mother's table cloths, and she wants also 2½ doz. of napkins to match them. Am sorry you forgot to send Mr. Appleton's seeds. Enclosed you have £150 Stg. which place to the c<sup>t</sup> of Brown D. Hollins. The News from Washington to the most knowing Federal and Democratic characters yesterday and to-day is, that the Executive are pledged to France to go to War with England, and that the measure is fully determined on and is shortly to be brought forward. The most sanguine in their expectations of the removal of the Non importation act have now lost all hope, and it is even doubtful whether it is brought forward again. Monday the 20th was the day fixed. Probably the packet may not go until after that and may have later news upon the subject. George had better not make any purchases in expectation of the renewal of the Intercourse, but remain in Lpool until my arrival. We shall then know better what new projects of business it will be advisable to pursue.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. William A. Brown, of Liverpool.

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Don't by any means touch Exchequer Bills or any kind of Government security. A War with this country would depreciate anything of that kind prodigiously. If you cannot get us much private paper from E. R. & Co. with which there cannot be any risk, you must leave it with our Bankers. I cannot conceive for a moment there can be the smallest risk with them, and the object whether we get 4 or 5% until I arrive is of no importance. The primary object is safety. If you have loaned a part to Her (?) Montgomery & Co. it is well, as it divides the risk if any. Should War take place, it's probable we shall have instructions to place by some means a large amount of the funds in our hands in a neutral country if such is to be found, that the owners may get it here, but nothing specifick can be said upon this subject until we see further.

Yours,

WM. BROWN.

BALTIMORE, 22 June, 1812.

MR. WILLIAM CUMMING.

*Dear Sir:* Your favor of 20 Inst. is received and observe as things have turned out it would have been well if pointed directions had been given William Brown & Co. to hold over part of our Tobacco; but long since the receipt of your favor of 4th the prevailing opinion was that the War measure would not be carried in the Senate. Indeed 4 days before we received the declaration large bets were offered that it would not pass. Knowing as we did that the voice of the people to the eastward was almost unanimous against War we were led to believe that even the Executive were secretly endeavoring to prevent it. Indeed such were our hopes and expectations that we were frequently, since the sailing of the last packet, glad we had not given any positive directions to hold part on. The opinion William gave the House by every opportunity since the Embargo was laid was that the great majority of the people here said war was unavoidable, but we could not bring ourselves to believe such a measure would be carried in the unprepared state of the country. William is still here waiting for some opportunity to get away. If he cannot meet a good direct one to take his family, he will endeavour to get himself by some neutral

port if the Embargo is removed, if not by way of Canada. We have a letter from Wm. B. & Co. written and signed James Cumming, of which you have an extract. W. A. B. had been summoned up to London about the Orders in Council with several other Liverpool people. He must be returned on the 10th as some of their letters to their friends are signed by him, altho written by J. C.<sup>1</sup> We expect the few hhds. Tobacco he mentions being sold must have been before they knew of the Embargo, altho the letter does not state.

Believe us, Dear Sir,

Your Assd. H. Sts.

ALEXANDER BROWN & SONS.

BALTIMORE, 21 Dec., 1812.

MR. JOHN A. BROWN.

DEAR JOHN: I wrote you on the 28th ulto. p. *Stag* advising that a bill had been reported to Congress which would effectually prevent the use of British Licenses. Since then nothing further has been done in that business and it now seems pretty certain nothing will be done in it, from our having wrote you that letter recommending the Ship to come home here unless you sold her for a good price. If you received it before she sailed, you would scarcely send her to Charleston. We shall however have order there, if she does come, to load and dispatch her immediately. The expectation of the licenses being stopped was so great at Charleston that prime rice had fallen from \$5 to \$2 $\frac{1}{2}$  to \$3. We are certain however it will get up as soon as they learn that Congress are not likely to take any steps to stop the Licenses. We learn however that the British Government stopped granting them about the middle of September. Hope if the *Armata* does go to Charleston, the one she has will serve her until she completes the 2nd voyage. We got out 6 by the Pacific but unfortunately at a time when there was every expectation that an immediate stop would be put to their use which induced us to sell them at low prices for vessels then ready to report, say 3 to 400 Dollars each. To-day they have taken a rise. \$700 has been refused altho several were sold in the morning at \$500. Should suppose if the *Armata's* present one carries her to Lisbon some

<sup>1</sup> James Cumming.

plan or other can be adopted of getting her home in ballast if she cannot be sold to advantage after making the 2nd voyage or if peace does not take place in the mean time. The bond business is still before Congress and the issue still uncertain. Having learned some Algerine cruisers are outside the straits we shall feel uneasy until we hear of your arrival. There is no account yet of any of them being further north than Cape St. Vincents.<sup>1</sup>

Believe me, dear John,

Your affectionate father,

ALEX. BROWN.

BALTIMORE, 29 Dec., 1812.

MR. GEORGE BROWN.

DEAR GEORGE: Yours and Wms. Letters with the several enclosures per George Washington came safe to hand and am truly sorry to find Wm. A. has acted in such a manner as to induce Wm. to dissolve the partnership,<sup>2</sup> but I do not see how he could do otherwise. It would be such a weight on his mind to have a partner in whom he had not full confidence. Your Uncle John's<sup>3</sup> letters surprise me and are very unwarranted and unbecoming. Still it will give me a great pleasure if the dissolution can be accomplished without making a family quarrel, which of all quarrels is the most distressing. I have written to Wm. by a cartel on the point of sailing from New York and a copy goes by this conveyance, which I would have enclosed you open, had I been certain of your being in Lisbon, but I think it's possible you may be on the way home as it would be useless Jno. and you both staying. I think it was very well your going by Lisbon and procuring all the information you can as to the mode of managing a neutral trade. We can give very little information on the subject here. What occurred to me has been written to John directed to the care of Mr. James Creighton at I. Bulkely & Sons.<sup>4</sup> I shall direct

<sup>1</sup> Probably an allusion to John's going to Lisbon to await a chance of returning home.

<sup>2</sup> See Chap. V, page 66.

<sup>3</sup> John Brown of London, brother of Alexander Brown.

<sup>4</sup> A Lisbon firm.

this letter as you desire to Gold Brothers & Co. I have also written John directed to Creighton. If John should not be in Lisbon, get his letters and open them. A law has at length passed Congress relieving the merchants from their bond for all goods bought in England before the official declaration of War was known there, provided they were shipped between the 23 June and 15th Sept. last, bona fide American property. This will we think embrace all the goods we had out. I am fully convinced this Government are greatly disappointed in the success of their War measures. It is now certain there will be a majority in next Congress for Peace (if not of Federalists). This circumstance will make them very anxious to meet the views of the British as soon as possible in making an honorable adjustment, provided the British still continue willing to meet them. Congress are afraid to lay the direct Taxes, and I do not think they can borrow money unless they give more than 6 pct. which would be unpopular. Thus circumstanced, many well informed people think a peace in the course of the spring extremely probable. This should make any circuitous voyage be undertaken with great caution. Indeed I am clearly of opinion before any thing material is done, you ought after getting all the information you can get, to come home and if the War continues consult and arrange matters with your friends here, as, [if] settlement in Lisbon should be thought advisable, you will be able to carry out with you the views and arrangements that may be necessary, much better than by letter. If the *Armata* gets safe to Lisbon and home again, not being insured, we cannot make less than 60 or 70 Thousand Dollars by this year's trade. Circumstanced as we now are, it would be wrong for us to run the risk of commencing any establishment or trade that could not be carried on without hazard.

Believe me, dear George,

Your affectionate father,

ALEX. BROWN.

BALTIMORE, 3 April, 1813.

MR. WM. BROWN.

*Dear Sir:* We are in receipt of your letter of 23 Jan'y and shall be glad to hear of all the property we are concerned in being sold. Mr.



E. Riggs requested us to mention that he would also be glad to hear of his Tobacco being sold at the price you quoted to him or even less. . . . Your little daughter is in as good health and spirits as you would wish her and is a great pet with more people than her grandmother.

Believe us, dear William,

Yours affectionately,

ALEXANDER BROWN & SONS.

BALTIMORE, 3 April, 1813.

MR. WM. BROWN.

DEAR WM.:

A report is in circulation that Gallatin is going as a negotiator to Russia to treat with Great Britain for Peace. If so, we may still hope that desirable event may be at no great distance, which induced us to make a speculation in Exchange in conjunction with P. E. Thomas & George in the enclosed bill George Tyson on Cropper Benson & Co. £10,000, Six Thousand of which place to our credit and Four to their credit. 2d of both those bills will go by the *Francis Freeling* Cartel. We have already advised that all letters coming and going by Cartels are opened. D. A. Smith is going to Phila. We shall give him some bills if he can get a good Exchange to take advantage of it. We have received your letter of 23 Jan'y by way of Lisbon accompanied by a postscript from John of 27 February. We hope the next account will bring us an account of everything we are concerned in being sold at the then prices. We cannot think this War will continue long. Mr. E. Riggs is now in town and will be extremely glad to hear of the sale of all his Tobacco in your hands at the prices you mention in your last to him dated early in Jan'y. He requests us to say that he would be well pleased to hear of sale at even less. We are all well and your little daughter enjoys uninterrupted good health and spirits.

Believe us, dear William,

Yours affectionately,

ALEX. BROWN & SONS.

BALTIMORE, 7th *May*, 1813.

MR. WM. BROWN.

DEAR WM.: The foregoing is duplicate of our last respects to you forwarded by Mr. D'Arcy who goes in a neutral vessel, we believe direct for Liverpool. You would learn from Mr. D'Arcy the state of alarm we are kept in by several British ships of War being opposite the mouth of our River for some time. They have sent up some barges and burned French Town & Havre de Grace & Hughes Cannon Foundry near the latter place. If there was a depth of water or if they had a sufficient number of land troops, they would no doubt pay Baltimore a visit. Great exertions are making to strengthen the works at the fort and other points round the Town, and numbers of militia are coming in from the country, which added to the volunteers and militia of the city, must in a short time make the place too formidable to be attacked by any number can be brought against it, but at present considerable alarm has been excited by the burning of defenceless villages, which has induced the Banks to remove their specie to Frederick, and very many of the dry goods merchants are moving a considerable part of their goods, some to George Town and some 8 or 10 miles into the Country. We have not yet moved anything, indeed we have only a few boxes of linen and our houses and furniture that can suffer and our bills receivable are of such a complexion that it is impossible to lose much of them, happen what will. Should the alarm continue, the family will move to the Country. This state of things and not knowing well how to employ money with safety has induced us to keep remitting rather more than we intended. Hope you can continue to make interest of them without risk. . . . We perceive by a late arrival from London that the whole coast from New York to the Mississippi is declared in a state of blockade which will prevent neutrals from doing anything. We have no letters from you later than 23rd Jan'y and from John to 25 March. Ann<sup>1</sup> is as well as you could wish her. We purpose sending her, Margaretta and

<sup>1</sup> William Brown's little daughter.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Leadley Brown, son of George Alexander Brown, who, at the time of the War with England in 1812, was in the office of Alexander Brown & Sons in Baltimore, writes that his father in his memoirs prepared for the use of the family,

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Ellen to the country in the mean time,<sup>3</sup> and the rest of the family will follow, should the danger become serious.

Believe us, dear William,  
Your aff. friends,  
ALEX. BROWN & SONS.

BALTIMORE, 7th, *May*, 1813.

MR. JOHN A. BROWN.

DEAR JOHN: We are in receipt of your sundry favours of 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 14th, 15th, 17th & 25th March. You mention having wrote us by the *Marmion*. You also mention to Washington Hall having wrote him by that ship. Neither of us has received any letters by that ship. You will see by the above dates whether any is missing. The enclosed letter to William gives you all the news. We wrote you immediately on George's arrival under date 5 March long letters, and sent them (3 copies) on to New York by Mr. Auchincloss. He was unfortunately taken sick on the road and died shortly after he got to New York, so we think it doubtful whether the letters were forwarded. In these letters we stated to you that the Blockade would prevent the chance of doing anything from this country to Lisbon and that unless some arrangements of business entered into by William and you made it necessary for you to remain in Lisbon, you might as well go over to England & see your friends, as nothing was doing here. Since then we have advices of your disposing of some of the French purchases to great advantage which we are well pleased at, and think it most probable you and Wm. would arrange to keep Moore purchasing and you to remain in Lisbon selling. . . . Captain Logan put into Charleston in place of going to Wilmington, had he gone to Wilmington the salt

mentions the outbreak of fierce riots in Baltimore in 1811, between the parties called Democrats and Federalists, of whom the former were in favor of the then threatened war with England and the latter against hostilities. His father also states "that in 1833 he was acquainted with a Mr. Thompson who had been tarred and feathered during these riots and who showed the marks of bruises then received and of his arm having been broken. When war at last did break out, Baltimore was bombarded by the British. The schoolboys were given a holiday, and he says he had a fine view of the bombardment from an eminence to which he was taken by an old and faithful negro servant of the family, by name George Spriggs."

would have brought a profit. As it is we expect it will about safe us. Great quantities have arrived at Charleston. While the War lasts there is not the smallest chance of any kind of business being done here. All water communication is cut off. Not an oyster boat or wood craft can get up our River. Every supply has to come by land which has very much advanced our markets, Wood \$10 p. cord. I feel pleased you are in a place of safety, and your Mother would now be glad Geo. & Jas. were with you, for tho I cannot [think] they will ever be able to destroy Baltimore, yet we shall be kept in a continual alarm all the summer. Believe me, dear John,

Your affectionate father,

ALEX. BROWN & SONS.

BALTIMORE, 8th *September*, 1813.

MR. JOHN BROWN.

DEAR BROTHER: I am in receipt of your esteemed favor of the 24th of May and rejoice most sincerely that my letter had in some measure the effect of opening a door to a reconciliation between you and William.<sup>1</sup> I hope and trust it may be a source of happy end, for of all disputes those between relations are generally carried on with the greatest acrimony and interest the public no further than to amuse them. On the subject of exchange, it fluctuates according to the public expectations of peace. On Admiral Warren's mission to this country in November last Exchange got up to 10 to 11 per cent discount. On the failure of that negotiation it declined again to about the price you mention. Immediately, however, on its being known that our Government had accepted the Russian Mediation and were about sending Commissioners there to negotiate, it got up again early in April. We sold £12,000 to the Government at 13 per cent discount, and they have lately been buying largely at 14 which is now considered the current price. Peace we think would advance it considerably and the continuance of the war and our present prohibitory system of British goods would have a contrary effect. Am I to understand from your letter that you wish the £1,000 loaned to Brother

<sup>1</sup> See Chap. V, pp. 65, 66.

Stewart to be repaid and remitted? If so he will no doubt comply, although you may readily suppose he cannot yet have made so much as will enable him to repay these loans and continue to carry on his business as it requires a considerable capital to do it to advantage. I loaned him £3,000 sterling exclusive of the loan from you. In a little time I hope he will be able to begin reducing it by degrees without impairing his means of carrying on the business. Referring you to the Thomas letters of 19th of June and 10th of August which have been inclosed to Liverpool for reasons which will explain themselves, believe me, &c.,

(Signed) A. BROWN.

Letters written after the death of Alexander Brown by James and George to their brother William in Liverpool give such a vivid picture of the loyalty of the sons to the memory of their father and their purpose to carry out what they believed would have been his wishes, and indicate so clearly the conservative manner in which they desired to carry on the business, that a few extracts will bear perusal.

In a letter from James to his brother William dated Baltimore, April 10, 1834, after giving an account of his father's illness and death, he states that his mother's health is as usual and that "it will be our united care to afford her all the comfort and consolation in our power. . . . We have opened a door of communication from her house to George's so that they are the same as one house." He encloses a copy of his father's will executed before he went to Liverpool in 1824, when his fortune was very moderate as compared with the property he left at the time of his death, and adds, "We all feel and think if he had made a will lately, which he spoke of doing, he would have enlarged mother's portion, for altho' she will not

spend the income of even \$100,000 yet we would like to put it in her power not only to continue his subscriptions to all the objects of the day to which he was friendly, but to enlarge them or use in any manner she may please. We therefore unite in opinion here that we will increase her portion to \$150,000, and purpose transferring into her name that amount of the Maryland 5 Prct. so as to put her beyond the reach of contingency. This I doubt not will meet your approval."

In speaking of the future of the business he writes, "As to the division of future profits of the house on this side, as you are now the oldest, we should like an expression of your opinion how you think the future earnings should be divided. For the present year we purpose making no change but dividing  $\frac{1}{3}$  as heretofore." In response to this it appears that William makes a very liberal suggestion, that Alexander Brown's portion of the earnings of the American house, say  $\frac{1}{3}$ , should after this year be divided between the three brothers in America, and asks if this would meet their wishes, to which George replies that the arrangement is entirely satisfactory to him and undoubtedly will be to John and James also. George goes on to say, "As to future business we all agree here we had better rather *curtail* than extend our operations. It's wearying to our constitutions to have so much to think of, and as our head is removed who thought for us, it will throw more reflection on each of our minds. We are not sure but that the state of the times and the intensity of my Father's reflections on all subjects to which his mind was directed may have had some influence on the brain and contributed to produce the melancholy event

over which we mourn. The Canton business has always been an anxious one from the amounts involved. That is now winding itself up pretty fast and will not again be embarked to any extent & we would caution you on that point. It will be overdone from England & the plentiness of money on your side will contribute to it. We shall confine ourselves chiefly to our Exchange & Comm. business keeping that as moderate as we can, employment being more an object now than the acquisition of further wealth. There will be no difficulty here in employing any amount of your capital you can spare & that too in safety as soon as the Bank<sup>1</sup> question is settled one way or another, so that you need not on that score feel anxious to look for employment in foreign Countries. We see in your remarks on your Balance sheet you spoke of advancing on goods to Canton & waiting *proceeds of sales*; this I understand from John is entirely at variance with the agreement made in Phila. & will never answer. We have no doubt your means can be used here to produce as good an interest as the interest commn. you will get and more within control. I would therefore urge you not to be anxious for that kind of business and to keep strictly under limit as to amount. As you will perceive my Father left no legacies in his Will to any of the charitable institutions, but knowing his views & wishes on that subject have been much changed since that will was drawn, we have made some donations in honour of his memory which may amount to \$6 or 7000 which we doubt not you will approve."

He urges also that his brother should not only increase

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the First Bank of the United States.

Mr. Shipley's compensation but look out for some efficient person to help in his business in Liverpool and adds, "We are all now advancing in life & some [of] us may be cut off suddenly and as unexpectedly as my Father, and we ought to make every arrangement we can while in health to give each other as little inconvenience & uneasiness as possible when removed."

In writing to his brother William from Baltimore on June 21st, 1834, in reply to a letter received, in which William appears to have taken exception to the method of disposing of their father's interest in some of the ships, George Brown writes, "I am sorry that you should have supposed for a moment when we proposed taking the ships at a fair valuation on arrival that you were not to have your proportion of their earnings. . . . All A. B.'s property I consider is to be divided equally between us after taking out Mother's share. . . . The only object in taking the ships to our<sup>1</sup> account is that an oath has been taken that no foreigner is interested in them which A. B. was enabled to do. . . . Now it will be different . . . and the house will be allowed interest on their value from the day they are taken on our own account. We shall be quite satisfied if they hold their own. We believe ships are not likely to be what they have been. Two of them are losing money every year, and if it were not for the business they take to the Liverpool house, we would dispose of them at once." The letter closes as follows: "I trust and hope that nothing will interrupt that affectionate and brotherly love we have always had for each other. As [long as] our dear Father lived we all gave up to

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, the brothers in America, George, John, and James.



his mature judgment & God forbid that anything should occur to break the bond of Union we have all done so well under, & as far as lies in my power it shall be adhered to. Mother continues pretty much in her usual health. Mrs. Brown unites with me in love to yourself & family.”

Another letter from George to William Brown dated July 12, 1834, reads as follows:

On looking over some papers I find I have not acknowledged receipt of yours of 29 March. As respects the receipts of the RailRoad<sup>1</sup> it's impossible to say what is the net earning as the Road is not entirely finished & it is not an easy thing to tell exactly what is the cost of repairs & construction, but suppose it is paying something, probably 2pct, but it's all laid out on the Road and no dividends will be made until all is completed. This was a great error fallen into at first. I observe you still take a good deal of interest in Railroads. It is to be hoped they will pay better with you than here. I have no doubt that many will be made here that will not pay the Expenses. The Susquehanna Rail Road I consider a total loss. You ask in a letter why I resigned from being President of the Mechs Bk. There is a responsibility attending such situations, & after my Father's death I made up my mind that it would be best to give all my situations up where responsibilities were attached, & resigned from the Bank as also from [being] Treasurer of the Rail Road,<sup>2</sup> believing our own business would be full occupation. For my services as President of the Bank \$1,000 was received, but I never got a cent for the other, & [was] in fact a good deal out of pocket by it. I mean to keep clear of every situation that will interfere with our business. I presume you are not at all aware of the amount of money locked up in various ways, some of which was a matter of choice and others to save debts. . . . James sent you list of money locked up in New York almost all of which arose out of the Hardware business and to promote the interest of the Liverpool House which no doubt will end in some loss. . . . It would

<sup>1</sup> The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.

<sup>2</sup> The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.



The Baltimore Office

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be my wish to confine ourselves more to a Banking business & have less to do with goods, as I am convinced until the B. U. S. question<sup>1</sup> is settled, the Commissions on sales or credits lodged will not pay the bad debts, & that having the command of money, safe operations can be made. When we sell bills we almost always get endorsed paper having 2 or 3 months to run, but not so with goods, as the credit is 8 mos. & that to single names, which one will often be mistaken in, as so many changes take place in that time."

On the 29th of August, 1834, he writes to the same correspondent, "I observe what you say about the ships and entering into large operations for the benefit of the house in Liverpool. We have always taken the same interest in the house that you have, looking upon it as one and the same concern and any business that involves the risk of heavy losses to it causes us to feel anxious. The Cotton trade is no doubt a pleasant one, but the competition for it being so great, people are almost willing to go any lengths to get the consignments. We understand many houses will advance the whole cost. . . . We are aware that some risk must be run in all business and we are willing to incur it, but as our dear Father endeavoured to impress on us all that as we had now made an independent fortune it would increase rapidly with the accumulation of interest. Mr. Oxley of Liverpool was here a day or two ago. I thought it would be gratifying to you if he could give you an account of Mother & therefore got him to call and see her. She was pretty well then & has continued so since. As respects the Packets we have taken this view of them, that if the Liverpool house made their commissions on the lines we would be gaining by

<sup>1</sup> That is, the renewal of the bank charter.

them even if they barely held their own. We have been at Copes for a long time to put a 5th Ship in the line & run them to the South but they are so timorous they will not do it."

The conservative attitude he maintained is further expressed in a letter written on July 11th in the following year where he says: "The principal thing to fear is [that] the houses we get large bills on in Philadelphia against American stocks may be dabbling in South American & other Stocks. As respects ourselves we are not in favour of going deeper in any stock than we can conveniently hold, in case it does not sell to a profit, & do not calculate on increasing our stocks further than a portion of the \$1,000,000 to be issued by the state of Maryland on the 15th inst., if it goes low."

## CHAPTER IV

### BALTIMORE—*Continued*

1839-1906. GEORGE BROWN. ALEXANDER BROWN & SONS (INCLUDING BROWN BROTHERS & COMPANY'S AGENCY, 1852-1865.

**A**FTER the death of Alexander Brown in 1834, his second son, George, became head of the Baltimore firm and in 1839 retired from the Philadelphia, New York, and Liverpool firms, continuing the firm of Alexander Brown & Sons as an independent house.

In writing to his brother William in November, 1837, with reference to his retirement, George Brown says: "As regards myself I often thought I would not have so much anxiety if I were to withdraw and do a limited business, but this might or might not be the case. I see you express great regret at the idea of John or myself withdrawing, and I perfectly agree with you that this is not the time to do so. . . . With respect to my retiring, if you think it more for the interest of the house I should do so, you are at liberty to announce it at the same time you announce John's withdrawal.<sup>1</sup> If not, I will continue as I am for some time longer. It would not suit me to give up business entirely, and if I retired to-morrow I would employ my capital in discounting and doing a banking

<sup>1</sup> John A. Brown, of Philadelphia, retired at this time, although notice of the dissolution was not published until 1839.

business on a moderate scale. . . . As respects the business to be attended to here, it keeps falling off, and unless some commission business is entered into there will be little or nothing to do, New York being the principal place for negotiating bills &c. It has been found most advisable to have the Southern accounts transferred there, most of which were formerly kept here, so that in fact there will be little else to attend to except arranging credits for the Liverpool house, and supplying the exchange for them. This state of things unfortunately throws more of the labor on James than his share, and I do not see how this is to be obviated."

A further letter to his brother William, dated January 18, 1838, with reference to the terms of the new arrangement between the brothers is so characteristic of his generous thought for others, that it deserves citation:

BALTO., 18 *Jany*, 1838.

DEAR WILLIAM:

Having now settled the books on this side, everything is left as belonging to the general concern except so far as relates to a final settlement with John at the end of this year, and its a matter of deep regret to me that he withdraws, but having determined to do so and Johnston<sup>1</sup> also going out will leave the Philadelphia house's share[s] about one fifth of the whole to be divided. . . . These the articles provide shall be exclusively the senior partners'. Now it appears to me that it would be but justice to our young partners in as much as the Philadelphia house will not be continued, [and] it is [therefore] to be presumed their emolument will not be as great as [it] otherwise would have been, [to make allowance for the fact in our new arrangement; and] I would propose at once to allow them about one-quarter of the shares relinquished by the Philadelphia house, leaving about three-quarters to be divided amongst us three Brothers. Now I

<sup>1</sup>*I. e.*, Johnston McLanahan, Mr. John A. Brown's partner in Philadelphia.



**Mr. George Stewart Brown**



1901

would propose as James has a large and expensive family to bring up in New York where living is very high that we allow him one-half of the remainder and you and I divide the balance. . . . I think its proper now to have this understanding as in case of further losses from new business done this year it might admit of a difference of opinion between ourselves as well as with our Juniors where the losses should fall and we should hope from the prospects of business that the earnings this year will enable us to divide in the shares now proposed. . . .

My mother has been quite well this winter and still continues so.

G. BROWN.

From 1839, therefore, after Mr. Brown's retirement, Alexander Brown & Sons represented both the Liverpool and American houses in Baltimore<sup>1</sup> and transacted a limited banking business on their own account; but in Febru-

<sup>1</sup>The terms of the arrangement are fully explained in the following letter of Mr. George Brown to his brother William:

BALTIMORE, 9 July, 1840.

DEAR WILLIAM:

I have before me your letter of 16th May in answer to James's letter of 9 April mentioning to you the proposed arrangement as to a division of commissions on both sides on all business originating or ending at Baltimore which I see you approve of. That being the case I now proceed to state what I understand is to be the arrangement and to which I agree, vis: One-half of the nett Commission to be allowed by you on all business from this place, that is, on all credits, money remitted to you from this place or elsewhere to be drawn for by parties here, also on all sales and purchases made by you for parties here. What I mean by nett Commission is after you charge brokerage, Bank Commission and guarantee, you taking all the risk of debts in Liverpool, and I one half of any loss that may arise on said business from over advances. The forwarding business being troublesome I do not expect you to credit me with any part of the Commission on it, nor on disbursements or the freight of ships going to you and of course any loss arising out of them is entirely your own, at the same time I will collect these accounts and remit free of any charge. For this trouble you will credit me with the commission on my interest in the ships, I mean on inward and outward freights and disbursements. On any bills I may draw *not remitted* to you I think  $\frac{1}{2}$  pct is as much as ought to be charged. As its not likely I shall be able to buy as much exchange here as will be required for transfers I shall be obliged occasionally to resort to New York and Phila. to supply what I may want. There is, therefore,

ary, 1852, George Brown, not wishing to be burdened any longer with the cares of active business, relinquished the agency of Brown Brothers & Company, and Brown, Shipley & Company, keeping the old firm alive to make a place for his eldest son, George Stewart Brown—then a young man in poor health—who became his partner in 1856.

Herman Henry Perry, at that time in the employ of Alexander Brown & Sons, was selected at first to take charge of the agency of the New York house, but in April, 1853, it passed under the care of William H. Graham, who was a son-in-law of George Brown and Bernard Campbell, partners in Campbell & Graham, a well-known firm in Baltimore, both of whom had been brought up as young men in the Baltimore house. They took the office heretofore occupied by Alexander Brown & Sons, on the first floor of the building, at the corner of Balti-

no probability of my buying any in this market on account of Brown Bros. & Co. as alluded to in your letter. I shall reciprocate and allow you on precisely the same items as you allow me, vis; One half nett commissions on all sales and purchases influenced by you and on all collections made for others through you, taking the risk of the debts on myself, but in case of loss by over advances or consignments to this place the loss to be equally divided.

Ships consigned to me I put on the same footing as those to you, vis: to allow no division on freights, disbursements, &c., as Capt'n Graham attends to the ships and gets one half, its no object dividing the balance and you will please bear in mind that I would like as many ships sent as you can on his account. If any cargo is purchased we divide with you. With respect to our exchange or interest accounts being dovetailed into each other, it appears to me there will be no difficulty about it. An interest account is to be kept in Liverpool and on this side we see no necessity of having any balance worth naming, but if it should be so an interest account can be kept also. I do not wish the foregoing arrangement to take effect at Liverpool until 31 Decr next when all the accounts current will have been made up, so that any foreign credits now lodging will come under the new arrangement, it being my wish that any business commenced and wound up this year shall be for your benefit agreeably to the former understanding. The



Mr. John N. Brown



1893

Mr. J. Harmon Brown

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more and Calvert Streets, while that firm moved to the second story. Later, Mr. Campbell retired, and Mr. Graham associated with himself John N. Brown and J. Harmon Brown, half brothers of Stewart Brown of New York. This Agency was maintained until 1865, when it was closed and the Baltimore business of the American and English houses again taken over by Alexander Brown & Sons under the management of George Stewart Brown, George Brown's eldest son.

George Brown died August 26, 1859. Like his father and brothers, John and James, he was modest and retiring in disposition, independent in judgment, and wise in counsel. Endowed with great shrewdness and strict integrity, he was quick to avail himself of opportunities for successful business ventures. But, although during the whole of his life he was actively engaged in affairs and connected with most of the important business organiza-

arrangement on this side is as follows, viz: That we are to make all of Brown Bros. & Co., and Brown & Bowen's collections and remittances from here free of charge and in lieu thereof we shall expect Brown Brothers & Co., or the Phila. house (if continued) to purchase sterling for me when required free of charge to enable me to furnish settlements here, the bills of course being at my risk. The division on consignments, &c. will apply to the houses on this side the same as with you. By each taking the risk of guarantee in their respective places it keeps the accounts in such a way that they can always be settled promptly which I think very desirable with the exception of over advances which would have to be looked after but which I trust will not occur. The only thing we see difficulty in is the Postage, but even that I do not think of much moment as the house in Liverpool ought to charge a single letter for every transfer ordered or bills remitted on account of others and frequently there will be a number in one letter. This will cover all postages incurred both here and with you; at any rate the difference will be so trifling its not worth keeping any account with each other on that score.

I remain,

Your affectionate Brother,

GEORGE BROWN.

tions of the city, he was not neglectful of public duties, and at the age of forty-nine, at the height of his business activity, he faithfully served, first as a private soldier and afterward as first lieutenant, in a volunteer cavalry company which was raised by a number of the best citizens after the great riot of 1835, to preserve peace in the City of Baltimore. There was scarcely an institution of importance in Baltimore, of a philanthropic or public nature, in which he was not more or less interested. He was one of the original trustees of the Peabody Institute and took an active part in its affairs as long as he lived. The House of Refuge for juvenile offenders was a special object of his care, and the monument to his memory, which has since his death been erected there by the liberality of the late Benjamin Deford, worthily attests his generosity and valuable services to that institution.<sup>1</sup> He was also the first

<sup>1</sup> THE MONUMENT AT THE HOUSE OF REFUGE

In Memoriam

George Brown,

one of the Founders

and until his death the first President of this Institution.

In spirit eminently charitable,  
cautious in judgment, in action  
prudent, wise in council, and  
an earnest helper in all good works.

From his abundant means  
he bestowed his gifts  
with an open hand and a cheerful heart.

Living, he enjoyed  
the consummation of his Christian deeds.

Dying, it was as a good steward,  
in humble trust of the Master's acceptance  
and in the peaceful hope of a  
blissful immortality.



**Mr. William H. Graham**



**Mr. William Graham Bowdoin**



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2  
1

1  
2  
3

president of the excellent charity known as the Baltimore Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor.

Deeply religious, though quiet and unassuming, Mr. Brown was a member of the First Presbyterian Church, under the charge of the Rev. Dr. Backus, contributing by his example and liberal pecuniary aid to the cause of the church to which he was devoted.

True to a principle which had actuated him during life, that his charities should be distributed as unostenta-

THIS STONE

may serve to recall his virtues;  
his best monument  
is this  
House of Refuge.

“Si monumentum quaeris, circumspice.”  
“Faithful unto death.”

“He delivered the poor that cried,  
and the fatherless and him that  
had no helper. The blessing of him  
that was ready to perish came upon  
him, and he caused the widow’s  
heart to sing for joy.”

Born in  
Country Antrim, Ireland,  
April 4, 1785.  
A Citizen of the United States  
1804.

Died in Baltimore  
August 26, 1859.

This Monument  
was erected by  
Benjamin Deford,  
one of the managers of this Institution, as a mark of esteem for the  
memory of  
a venerable colleague.

tiously as possible, he made no provision for them by will, but made his widow the almoner of his bounty; and well and faithfully did she execute the responsible and difficult task. The beautiful Presbyterian Church erected by her on Park Avenue and known as the Brown Memorial Church, attests not only her devotion to his memory, but her fervent attachment to the faith in which her husband had been educated, in which he lived, and in humble reliance on which he died.

In 1865, when Alexander Brown & Sons again became the representatives in Baltimore of Brown Brothers & Company and Brown, Shipley & Company, George Stewart Brown took as his partner his brother-in-law, William H. Graham, and later, in 1872, William Graham Bowdoin, a relative of Mr. Graham. Under Mr. Brown's able management the old firm of Alexander Brown & Sons again took a leading place in the financial community of Baltimore, a position which it has maintained to the present day under the management of his son, Alexander Brown, who became his partner in 1882. The firm is, therefore, now represented in Baltimore by the fourth generation of lineal descendants of the founder.

Of the living it is not my purpose to speak, but I cannot close this account of the Baltimore firm without paying a special tribute to the ability, integrity, and high character of my cousin George Stewart Brown, whom my father considered one of the best men of business he had ever known. Through years of impaired health he stood for everything that was best in the financial and commercial circles of his native city, and took an active part in its philanthropic and civic affairs.



Mr. Alexander Brown

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It was during the active business life of George Stewart Brown, and while Brown Brothers & Company were represented in Baltimore by their own agents under the charge of Mr. Graham and others, that the only event occurred which threatened a serious break in the business and family relations of the firms. At the opening of the Civil War a relative of the family, George William Brown, a descendant of Dr. George Brown,<sup>1</sup> was Mayor of Baltimore. When the first Massachusetts regiment passed through the streets of the city on its way to Washington in response to President Lincoln's call for troops, the Mayor, fearing a riot, ordered all American flags taken down. By the orders of James Brown of New York, and as an evidence of the loyalty of the firm to the Northern cause, the flag had been displayed over the door of the Baltimore agency, which, as already explained, was on the first floor of the building occupied by Alexander Brown & Sons, whose office was on the second floor, and who, with almost all other residents of Baltimore, because of close family connection with the South, sympathized to some extent with the Southern cause. The removal of the flag caused great indignation in the New York office, and a peremptory order was issued for its restoration, with severe condemnation of those who had caused its removal. George Stewart Brown defended the action of the Mayor and took exception to the orders from New York, maintaining that the Mayor's policy was really intended to prevent disorder and to insure the safety of the troops during their march through the city. The incident caused considerable irritation at the time, but now that the passions

<sup>1</sup> Brother-in-law of Alexander Brown, Sr.

of those days have cooled, and we look back calmly at the whole situation, it is evident that the action of the Mayor was intended to avoid a collision between the populace and the troops, and, as such, might be sincerely supported by a patriotic Union man. Those were trying days for families in the border States, and it is a subject for devout thankfulness that while divergent views were held and expressed with characteristic earnestness by members of the family and of the firms in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and England, no serious break occurred.

In 1902, Austin McLanahan, a grandnephew of Mrs. George Brown, Sr., and Harmon B. Bell, grandson of J. Harmon Brown, both of whom had been for many years in the service of the firm, became Alexander Brown's partners, and in 1904 B. Howell Griswold, Jr., his son-in-law, also joined the firm.

Under the management of George Stewart Brown until the time of his death in 1890, and under that of his son, Alexander Brown, up to the present date, Alexander Brown & Sons have taken a leading part in most of the enterprises that centre in Baltimore and its immediate neighborhood, as well as in many others of a more national character. Here again has been illustrated the wisdom of old Alexander Brown's maxim, "Shoemaker, stick to your last," as undoubtedly the success of the firm has been largely due to the promotion and management of enterprises chiefly connected with Baltimore, the needs and development of which could be closely followed.

In 1901, Alexander Brown & Sons, finding their old building inadequate, erected on its site for their own occupancy a modern fire-proof building of one story in



Mr. Harmon Brown Bell



Mr. B. Howell Griswold, Jr.



Mr. Austin McLanahan



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colonial style. It is an interesting and remarkable fact that, though this building stood in the very heart of the great fire of 1904, it was practically uninjured.<sup>1</sup> The only damage sustained was a slight disfigurement of the cornice and of a part of the side wall of the west corner, and the burning of the floor of a small room in the rear, into which the fire from the adjacent building had penetrated through a window broken by a falling brick. The building was saved not only because of its fire-proof construction and copper gutters, but also because it was surrounded on almost all sides by very tall buildings, which took fire at the top, creating a partial vacuum in which the low building stood. Moreover, the wall of the building adjoining it on the west fell at an early stage of the fire, and covered the roof with a mass of brick to the depth of three or four feet, which served as an additional protection. Since the fire, an adjoining lot has been purchased upon which an addition is now being built.

<sup>1</sup>The portrait of Alexander Brown and his four sons, which appears as the frontispiece, and which hung on the walls of the Baltimore office, was cut out of its frame after the fire began and removed to a place of safety. This portrait had been painted from photographs at the request of the present Alexander Brown a few years before the fire.

## CHAPTER V

### LIVERPOOL

1810-1839. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIRM IN LIVERPOOL. WILLIAM BROWN & COMPANY. WILLIAM & JAMES BROWN & COMPANY.

**W**HEN, in 1810, Alexander Brown's eldest son, William, obtained his father's consent to settle in Liverpool, that city was, as now, the principal shipping port for the north of England and Ireland.

A French traveller, Louis Simond by name, writing in the same year,<sup>1</sup> compares it to New York. At that time, the American town had already outstripped the English in size, having a population of ninety-six thousand, as against eighty thousand in Liverpool. Monsieur Simond notes that the port of Liverpool is very inferior to that of New York, which is one of the finest in the world, and he expresses his opinion that the average dwelling house in New York is better built than houses of the same class in Liverpool. But in other respects he gives the palm to the older city. He praises Liverpool for the number of her "literary establishments, with respectable libraries, in large and convenient apartments, well attended by the inhabitants of the town who are not so exclusively mer-

<sup>1</sup> "Journal of a Tour and Residence in Great Britain during the year 1810 and 1811, by a French Traveller," New York, 1815.

chants as those of the western continent." He notices that Liverpool is possessed of finer public buildings and that her docks are substantially built of freestone and not of trunks of trees, as in the new world. He comments upon the prodigious height of the warehouses of Liverpool and assures us that he has himself observed many nine stories high and has heard of others as high as thirteen stories. The rooms in these warehouses are not more than seven or eight feet high, and the floors are of iron. He also calls attention to the rapid growth of American commerce in the English port. Twenty years before the date of writing he had been shown the first sample of sea island cotton as a great curiosity in New York, and, in 1810, two hundred American vessels rode in Liverpool harbor, representing "in the article of cotton alone," a trade worth annually two million pounds."

Writing a few years earlier, an American, Benjamin Silliman,<sup>1</sup> describes in greater detail the wonderful commercial development of the great city, and comments more at length upon the lights and shades of its life as these had come under his observation. He writes as follows:

May 8. Mrs. —, at whose home I have met a degree of frankness and hospitality, which, if a fair sample of English domestic manners, does much credit to the country, informs me that there is an interesting circle of literary people here; but to a stranger, Liverpool appears almost exclusively a commercial town. Under the guidance of Mr. Wells, an English gentleman who had visited America, I have been to the Exchange, the great scene of the commercial transactions

<sup>1</sup> "A Journal of Travels in England, Holland and Scotland," by Benjamin Silliman, published by S. Converse, New Haven, 1820. Vol. I. Mr. Silliman visited Liverpool in 1805.

of the second trading town in the British dominions. The Exchange stands at the head of the handsomest street in Liverpool, and has strong claims to be considered an elegant building. It is, however, much too small for the commerce of the place, and for this reason they are now making an extensive addition to it. We ascended to the top of the building where we had a good view of the town.

It extends for two or three miles along the eastern bank of the Mersey. The country rises as it recedes from the river, so that a part of the town is built on the declivity of a hill. The streets contiguous to the river, which are principally on level ground, are narrow and dirty; they are crowded with carts and people, and in some of them the warehouses are carried up to a very great height. The streets on the slope of the hill are sufficiently wide, clean and handsome, but the houses, although substantial and highly comfortable, are generally inelegant in their exterior appearance. They are constructed with bricks of a dusky yellow color, obscured by the dust and smoke of coal; the bricks are not polished, but have a degree of roughness, which makes the town appear somewhat rude, and we look in vain for the highly finished surface of the finest houses of New York, Philadelphia and Boston, to which towns Liverpool is inferior in the beauty of its private buildings. The public buildings, however, with few exceptions, are elegant. They are constructed of hewn sandstone, furnished by a quarry immediately contiguous to the town. There are several handsome churches, some of which have lofty spires of stone, and there is a magnificent one with a vast dome modelled and named after St. Paul's at London.

On a hill back of the town are a number of beautiful situations. There is, on the highest part of the hill, a place called the Mount, where there is a public garden, with serpentine gravel walks, and in front of the garden there is a wide gravelled area, used as a promenade, which commands a fine view of the city, the river, the opposite county of Cheshire, and the distant mountains of Wales. The city is surrounded by lofty wind-mills, which are among the first objects which strike a stranger coming in from sea. On the hills are a multitude of signal poles; each principal merchant has one, by which a ship's name is announced a few hours before she arrives in the river.

There is a great number of sailing vessels and among these the American flag is very frequent. The American trade to this port is probably greater than to all the other ports of Britain: It has become highly important to the merchants of Liverpool, and of this they are sufficiently aware.

The port is difficult of access. The tides rise from 12 to 30 feet, and, at low water, a great part of the road<sup>1</sup> is bare. The currents are therefore very rapid, and it is only at rising water that ships can get in. There are, besides, so many shoals and sand banks, that, even then, it requires all the skill of the pilots to bring a vessel up to the town.

The docks are not here, as with us, stationed along the wharves, for, at low water, the foundations of those structures are in view, and ships moored by their sides would be left on the bare sand twice in twenty-four hours, with no small exposure to injury from the rapid influx and retreat of the water, and the great rise and fall which the ship must sustain by such powerful tides as flow in this channel.

To obviate these and other inconveniences, the ships are hauled into docks, where they lie in perfect security. These docks, of which there are six wet, as well as several dry ones, are among the principal curiosities of the place. In order to their construction a large area on the bank of the river is excavated to a sufficient depth by digging. It has a rectangular form, and is enclosed by very deep, wide and strong walls of massy hewn stone, sunk below the bottom of the cavity, and rising to the surface of the ground. There is an opening at the bason sufficiently wide to admit one ship at a time. This opening is closed by gates, which are hinged upon opposite sides of the canal, and, when shut, they meet at an angle sufficiently acute to enable them to sustain the pressure of the water in the bason. In short, they are constructed just as locks are in canals. They open inward, and their operation is very intelligible.

When the tide rises so as to bring the water in the river to the same level as that in the bason, the gates either open of their own accord or easily yield to moderate power exerted upon them. The water then flows indiscriminately in the river and in the bason, and it is at that time, or near it, that ships must pass in and out; for when the

<sup>1</sup> Old usage for "roadstead."

tide turns, the current, now setting outwards, closes the gates;—the water in the bason is retained, and the channel leading to it becomes entirely dry. The ships in the dock remain afloat, and the gates sustain the enormous weight of twenty feet of water. Great firmness is therefore necessary in the structure of the walls and of every part. When there is too much water in the docks, the excess is let out by means of vent holes, and it is obvious that the whole can be drawn off in this manner when it is necessary. The top of the gates is formed into a foot bridge, and a bridge for carts is thrown over the canal, somewhat near the outer bason. By means of machinery this last bridge is swung off to one side, when ships are to pass.

No small inconvenience is sustained by ships in getting into or out of dock; they are sometimes obliged to wait several days either for the spring tides or for their turns. . . . Much delay is said to be occasioned at the king's and queen's docks, by the captious and tyrannical disposition of the dock master. Last winter an American captain, pretending to shake hands with this dock master, and at the same time affecting to stumble over something, pulled him off, along with himself, into the water. He did not value a fall of ten feet, with some chance of drowning, compared with the pleasure of taking this kind of vengeance on a man who was cordially hated by all the American masters of ships.

The dry docks are intended solely for the purpose of repairing the ship's bottoms. They are nothing more than long and deep canals, whose sides are formed into sloping steps like stairs, and, as the object is to exclude the water, the gates open outwards. When a ship is to be admitted, the gates are thrown open at low water and she comes in with the flood. The dock is wide enough to hold only one ship at its breadth, but it is so long, that several can come in, in succession. After they have arrived at their places, they are moored, and when the tide retires, they are left dry, resting upon the bottom of the dock, and sustained in a perpendicular position by means of props. The gates being closed at low water, the next tide is excluded, and thus the workmen are admitted with safety and convenience quite down to the keel. . . .

There are press gangs now about Liverpool, and impressments

daily happen. I saw a sailor dragged off a few evenings since; he was walking with one who appeared to be a woman of the town, and he of course was considered a proper object of impressment; for it is the uniform practice of the press gangs to take all whom they find in such society, and all who are engaged in night brawls and drunken revels. Not that the press gangs have any *peculiar solicitude* for the preservation of *good morals*, but because such things afford somewhat of a pretext for a practice which violates equally the laws of natural liberty, and the principles of English freedom. I grant it is necessary, but it is still grossly unjust, and were consistency regarded when it interferes with national policy, the English courts of justice would grant prompt and full redress. No doubt every country has a full right to the services of its citizens, but this right should be enforced according to some principle of impartial selection, which would place every man under the same degree of liability. England would rise in arms, should the military impress for the army citizens of every rank, from the fields, the streets, and the public roads; but one particular class of men seem to be abandoned by society, and relinquished to perpetual imprisonment, and a slavery, which, though honourable, cuts them off from most things which men hold dear.

In Liverpool, as might be expected, American sailors are often impressed, but they usually get clear if they have protections, which are here more regarded than at sea. The press gang have a rendezvous on shore, to which they bring their victims, as fast as they find them; they have no secrecy about the matter, for the place is rendered conspicuous by a large naval flag hung out at a window. One would suppose that popular vengeance would be excited by this triumphant display of the effrontery of power trampling on personal liberty, but I believe the rendezvous is not often attacked, although it probably would be, were it not for the strong protection of government. . . .

The friend who had brought me to this interesting place, went with me to a large Guinea ship, a thing which I had always wished to see, with a curiosity like that which would have led me to the Bastille. We descended into the hold, and examined the cells where human beings are confined under circumstances which equally disgust decency and shock humanity. But I will not enlarge on a subject which,



though trite, is awfully involved in guilt and infamy. *Our* country, so nobly jealous of its own liberties, stands disgraced in the eyes of mankind, and condemned at the bar of Heaven, for being at once active in carrying on this monstrous traffic, and prompt to receive every cargo of imported Africans.<sup>1</sup> I did not come to England to see Guinea ships because there were none in America, but accident had never thrown one in my way before. Liverpool is deep, very deep in the guilt of the slave trade. It is now pursued with more eagerness than ever, and multitudes are, at this moment, rioting on the wealth which has been gained by the stripes, the groans, the tears, and the blood of Africans.

As already stated, Alexander Brown's eldest son, William, left Baltimore in 1809 for a visit to relatives in Ireland. He had never been robust, and as the climate of Baltimore proved trying, he decided to visit the old home. The change proved very beneficial. On the 1st of January, 1810, he married Sarah Gihon, daughter of Andrew Gihon of Ballymena, and took up his residence in Liverpool. His first home was at 3 St. George's Square, but afterward, as was the custom with most Liverpool merchants, he resided a little way out of town. His home was at Richmond Hill in the district of Anfield, where he lived until his death.

William Brown was twenty-six years of age when he began business in Liverpool, bringing to his work the advantage of four years' experience and training as a partner in his father's firm in America.

At first he represented the Baltimore house, looked after the firm's shipments from and to the Old World, and built up such other business for himself as he could. The

<sup>1</sup> In a note the author adds that the slave trade "is now (*i. e.*, in 1819), illegal by our laws, but there is reason to believe the censure is still in a degree deserved."



**Sir William Brown, Bart.**

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heavy shipments of goods and produce to and from Baltimore and the rapid increase of the exchange and credit business soon gave him ample employment, and England became his permanent home. After his marriage he returned to Baltimore with his wife for a visit to his parents. This was probably in 1811. To look after his business during his absence, he took for his partner his cousin, William A. Brown, son of his uncle, John Brown of London. The firm was known as William Brown & Company and continued until 1812. The Liverpool house, however, was at this time entirely distinct from the Baltimore firm, although intimately connected with it in many of its business ventures.

There is a family tradition that William was so much like his father in character, both being endowed with strong wills, both liking to have their own way, and both being somewhat quick of temper, that Alexander Brown thought it wiser not to risk the chance of a serious difference with his son, and preferred on that account to leave him with a free hand in the conduct of the Liverpool business, which, with the slow communication of those days, was too far away to be supervised or controlled by the home office. At any rate, whether the tradition be true or not, the arrangement was most fortunate.

While William Brown and his family were in Baltimore, the War of 1812 broke out, and they returned to England in August of that year in the *Pacific*, the first cartel sailing from New York after the commencement of the War.<sup>1</sup> On his return to Liverpool, the partnership

<sup>1</sup> A letter of Alexander Brown to William Brown & Company dated June 26, 1812, says: "William left us yesterday in hopes of finding some opportunity

with his cousin was dissolved <sup>1</sup> (with the approval of his father), as William had not been satisfied with the management of the business during his absence.<sup>2</sup> At that time or soon after, both his brothers, George and John, were in Liverpool. While the War lasted, business between the two countries almost ceased, but when peace seemed imminent in 1814, Alexander Brown suggested, as the result of a family consultation looking to a closer connection between the Baltimore and Liverpool firms, that John should remain in Liverpool and become a partner of his brother William, George returning home. For some reason, however, this plan was abandoned. George returned via Lisbon and Charleston and reached Baltimore on March 19, 1814. Alexander Brown writes to his son William: "Had it not been for letters from Mrs. Dickey to Mrs. Robert Dickey of New York, we would still be ignorant to whom John is married, as none of your letters

either direct or indirect of going home to England. What opportunity he may meet with, or when, is very uncertain; his wife and children remain here until some eligible opportunity offers for their going." On June 29, he writes to William A. Brown: "We have not yet heard of William's reaching New York, but learn the opportunity he expected to go by has been stopped for some days, and that it is uncertain whether she will go further than Halifax. If so, it is probable he may not go by her."

A later letter to William Brown & Company, dated August 8, 1812, adds: "William and family were to sail in the *Pacific* for Liverpool on Thursday last. Sam'l M. Moore also took passage in her." William's little daughter Ann seems to have been left behind with her grandparents. See Chap. III, pp. 35, 36, 37, letters of April 3 and May 7, 1813.

<sup>1</sup> The oldest letter-book of Alexander Brown & Sons, Baltimore, contains copies of letters written by Alexander Brown & Sons to William Brown & Company from the 14th of December, 1810, to the 21st of December, 1812. After that, correspondence is addressed either to William, George or John Brown individually, until 1815, when the correspondence with William & James Brown & Company begins.

<sup>2</sup> See letter of December 29, 1812; also letter of September 8, 1813, Chap. III, pp. 34, 39.

mention her name, and we have no letters from John since he left Liverpool." John subsequently returned to Baltimore with his wife, also sailing from Lisbon, but, as I have heard from my father, he was captured on his way home and carried into one of the West India ports.

Late in 1814, before the ratification of the Treaty of Peace, the three sons, George, John and James, though all residing in Baltimore, became partners of their brother William in the Liverpool firm. Active business did not begin, however, until 1815, and was carried on under the name of William & James Brown & Company, the first office being in Union Court, Castle Street.<sup>1</sup> Some time thereafter the firm moved to Chapel Street, where it continued, first at No. 7, and later on the opposite side of the street at No. 26, until the office in Liverpool was closed in 1889.

In 1816, Ellison Frodsham, manager since 1815, became William Brown's junior partner, and in 1830, he was succeeded by John Priestman. Mr. Priestman seems to have joined the firm, probably as manager, in 1819, and was a salaried partner from 1830 to 1846, when he died. Neither of these two men ever took any very prominent part in the management of the business.

In 1819, Alexander Brown & Sons write to William Brown, then thirty-five years of age, a characteristic letter, strongly opposing the investment of the firm's money in a cotton mill, and setting forth the principles which should govern him in the administration of his business.

<sup>1</sup> In 1821 Gore's Directory, Liverpool, states that the counting house of William & James Brown & Company was at 34 Strand Street, but I have not been able to confirm this from the firm's records.

27 October, 1819.

MR. WILLIAM BROWN.

*Dear Sir:* As our A. B. goes to Phila. to morrow morning to attend the meeting of the Stockholders Bank U. S. on 1 Nov., we answer your private letter of 9 Sepr. before his departure that he may see it. We all agree in opinion it would be wrong and imprudent to embark in any other pursuit than that we are respectively engaged in, and although the amount you would have to advance now to become interested with Moore in the Cotton Mill for one of your children is not large, yet it could not be spared without resorting to the financing business measure you point out, so long as we are such heavy holders of U. S. Bank Stock. However profitable the business may be now, we know of none subject to more reverses than the Cotton spinning trade, and becoming once interested even in the name of your child, your capital, credit & resources would be called into action for the use of that establishment whenever it would be required; and when once it's known or even suspected that you are in any way interested in such an establishment, it would do injury to the credit of your house. Look around you in Liverpool and see those Merchants who have so many concerns which they cannot superintend themselves,—how sooner or later it does them injury if it does not ruin them altogether. Having too many things to attend to, it distracts your attention and draws it off from your regular pursuit. We don't think you need be any wise apprehensive of not having your share of business. We are not by any means advocates for a large one. A small business well attended to is conducted with much more satisfaction & comfort, and if the capital is too large to be employed in [it], let it be invested in stocks. If we look round here we find that those persons who have kept steadily to one pursuit are far the richest men, & those who are interested with one & another in different pursuits, no matter how profitable they may be or appear to be at first, are always ruined sooner or later. We are therefore unanimously opposed to any interest being taken in the Cotton Mill.

In the management of one's business it's not only necessary to be correct but not to be suspected of incorrectness. If you or any of your family were interested in a Cotton Mill and it became known,

which must be the case, shippers of Cotton might conceive there was a risk if sent to you of being sold to your own establishment lower than it ought. You know how such persons are always disposed to grumble and find fault on losing sales. But on the score of Interest without any other consideration, one business properly conducted is the surest and safest way to make money and enables one to move with so much ease. The surplus funds can always be used with safety here to make 6 to 7 percent per annum and perhaps more. We will write again per *Belvidera* answering the letters from the house.

We remain,

A. BROWN & SONS.

As characteristic of the attitude of mind of the brothers toward stock operations, George writes in a letter of later date: "As respects stocks I have made up my mind to keep clear of them. . . . Stock jobbing is a trade of itself and only suits them that make a trade of it."

The correspondence from Baltimore in 1822 calls attention to the importance of meeting the wishes of importers in Baltimore for more regular and prompt sailings of vessels from Liverpool. In those early days, before the establishment of regular lines of packets between Liverpool and Philadelphia and New York, vessels sailing from Liverpool to Baltimore left at irregular times and only when they secured full cargoes. Baltimore merchants found that trade was leaving the city in favor of Philadelphia and New York, where the movement of goods to and from Liverpool was of sufficient volume to warrant the establishment of lines of packet ships with regular sailing dates. They complained that vessels loading in Liverpool for Baltimore waited so long for a full cargo that their competitors in New York and Philadelphia re-



ceived goods much earlier than they did, and their trade suffered in consequence. To give as much help as possible to the Baltimore merchants, Alexander Brown & Sons suggested that full cargoes for vessels sailing for Baltimore should be made up of heavy and bulky goods, such as salt or crates of crockery, taken either on ship's account or else bought by William & James Brown & Company and consigned to Alexander Brown & Sons for sale. In spite, however, of every effort to favor Baltimore as a port, the foreign trade of the country soon settled in the more northern ports. The following extracts from letters indicate the seriousness of the situation:

BALTIMORE, 12 April, 1822.

MESSRS. W. & J. BROWN & Co.

*Gentlemen:* . . . Our dry goods houses have become exceedingly uneasy about having a line of packets established between this and Liverpool, alleging their goods arriving so late is in part the cause why New York and Phila are carrying away all the trade. As to packets running regularly from here, it's out of the question, there is nothing to be had here that suits to go to Liverpool. We have however agreed with the importers to make the ships be punctual to a day in their departure from Lpool and to sail rather earlier than hitherto. A copy of the agreement signed by us and of that which will no doubt be signed by all the importers in town is enclosed. They promise to order their goods earlier down, and we must be prepared to fill up with salt and crates and be prompt in sailing as agreed on. If the first ship do not get goods and crates enough, she can bring fine blown salt in sacks wh[ich] is wanted. The succeeding ships can regulate by taking coarse salt & crates in lower hold and dry goods between decks, making your calculations as near as you can what room it will likely be necessary to leave. The dry goods people seemed to wish the *Franklin* to go out, and that we should own the three, but on Graham's % we will prefer his continuing in, provided he will conform

to the regulations & take his turn time about on the work & least profitable berth. They insisted on making the arrangement entirely with us, so that he must either go out or conform to what is reasonable. Should the *Franklin* damage any goods again, the dry goods people will insist on her withdrawing & that we shall supply her place. The *Belvidera*, *Tobacco plant* & *Unicorn* will answer until another new ship can be built. The dry goods people insist if the vessel sail earlier and punctually it will increase the quantity of goods, and we think [it] is worth while making the experiment for one year. The vessels this spring have had dreadfully bad weather. The *Belvidera* has slightly damaged some packages. She lost her stern boat and some spars.

BALTIMORE, 2 May, 1822.

GENTLEMEN:

Capt. Graham has done discharging the *Franklin* and is going directly back with staves and anything else she can get, so as to have time to copper in Liverpool and second the *Belvidera*. The *Tobacco plant* & *Unicorn* will both have to return to Philadelphia in the line, until they can be relieved by the new ship; so that we shall be in want of a ship to second the *Franklin* this fall, as the 3rd ship, Tenant's *Hyperion*, is going back to Orleans and may possibly go from there to Liverpool. If she has great dispatch she may possibly be in time. Should she or some other good Baltimore ship not be in your hand about the time the *Franklin* must clear out, you will have to take up some fine ship that will agree to clear out and sail on the day pointed out. This must be pointedly attended to. You must have a fast ship and pushing captain, but wait as long as it's safe before you take up any, in hopes of some good ship belonging to Baltimore arriving, or if not, something may arrive to yourself that will answer. As soon as we know of anything going to you that will answer, will advise you. . . .

You need not have been under any apprehension of our taking an interest in packets from Philadelphia or any other place that did not go entirely to you. The overture came from Copes with the understanding they were ready to run the line to you, or we should never have given it a consideration. We think them clever people and that

you will be pleased with the arrangement. It's certain if the line did not run to you, it would to some one else, which might have given an unexpected turn to your forwarding influence. Everything was well weighed before entering into the arrangement.

From the beginning of his business career William Brown tried to make his office as far as possible the headquarters of American captains trading in the port of Liverpool. In those early days, captains of American vessels were not merely expert sailors, but were men fairly well acquainted with commercial affairs, and often owners or part owners of the vessels which they commanded, and at times interested in their cargoes. There was in Liverpool a well known hostelry<sup>1</sup> famous for its turtle soup, and as Mr. Brown's house in St. George's Square was not very commodious, he used occasionally to invite the American captains in port to dine with him at this inn. After a time this became a regular practice and these dinners gave opportunity not only for the interchange of social civilities, which added greatly to the popularity of his firm, but for the discussion of commercial matters in the United States, which added greatly to his knowledge.

With the opening of the New York office in 1825, and the increasing importance of both Philadelphia and New York, William Brown found it impossible to manage the business in Liverpool with such assistance as he then had from Frodsham and Priestman, and an effort was made to secure some one thoroughly familiar with American business to assist him in Liverpool. Choice fell upon Joseph Shipley, Jr., at that time established in Liverpool

<sup>1</sup> The Waterloo Hotel. It was demolished some years ago to make room for the passenger station of the Midland Railway.



**Mr. Joseph Shipley**

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as the agent of John Welsh,<sup>1</sup> a well-known merchant in Philadelphia. Mr. Shipley belonged to one of the old Quaker families of Delaware who settled in Wilmington between 1730 and 1740. Receiving from Mr. Welsh, before he left the United States, full power of attorney to act for him in Great Britain, he reached Liverpool in November, 1819, opened an office there under the firm name of Joseph Shipley, Jr., & Company, and took charge of Mr. Welsh's vessels and cargoes consigned to that place, re-loading them for ports in the United States. The firm name was changed in 1822 to Shipley, Welsh & Company. It is evident that while in Liverpool, he had made a reputation for himself as a good merchant. He was also, I believe, well known both to my uncle, John A. Brown, and to my father. In 1826, in response to an offer made by Mr. William Brown, he, after conference with Mr. Welsh and with his approval, accepted Mr. Brown's offer and joined the Liverpool firm, he and Mr. Frodsham being the junior partners at that time.<sup>2</sup> In October of the same year he returned to the United

<sup>1</sup> Mr. John Welsh died March 5, 1854, at the age of 84. In 1834 his three sons, Samuel, John and William, formed the firm of Samuel & William Welsh, the predecessors of the present firm of S. & J. Welsh.

<sup>2</sup> The following letters, addressed respectively to Mr. Welsh and to Mr. John A. Brown of Philadelphia, explain more in detail the conditions under which Mr. Shipley entered the firm:

JOHN WELSH, Esq.

LIVERPOOL, 8th February, 1826.

*Dear Sir:* I have the pleasure to acknowledge receipt of your esteemed favor of 14th and 15th ulto, and feel very sensibly the friendly sentiments it conveys.

It was my wish to have communicated to you the arrangement with W. & J. Brown & Company before binding myself, but from Mr. Brown's delicate health he was unwilling to remain in uncertainty as to a future partner, and would have felt himself obliged to make an arrangement with another person. . . .

Mr. Brown is at present confined to his house, and on speaking with him on

States in the ship *Silas Richards* on a visit to his friends, as he had been absent from the country for seven years.

Up to 1836 Mr. Shipley was interested in the Liverpool house alone, but after that and until his retirement at the

the proposed arrangement for transacting your business, he wished it referred to John A. Brown, Philadelphia.

I write to him on the subject by this conveyance expressing my conviction that the arrangement would prove materially advantageous and that it would be particularly pleasing to me. I have stated that in our transactions I was always ready to accept for you without limit, of course; that you frequently had large funds in my hands, and that in all instances the expectations you had held out of remittances have been fully realized.

Should you have sent any person out this will be superfluous. If not, and you consider this arrangement with Mr. Brown desirable, I have no doubt that a little candor with respect to property would remove every difficulty. You are aware that you have never communicated with me on this point, nor have I ever asked or wished it. The times are now so critical that I am sure you will neither be offended or surprised if Brown & Co. require more positive information before they undertake to come under an uncovered advance to the amount you mention. It would grieve me if you should consider that I omitted to say or do anything in my power to meet your views.

I shall not, of course, advertise the partnership dissolved until matters are arranged, but hope you may have come to some understanding with John A. Brown and that I may hear from you decidedly by the next packet or that of 1st inst.

Yours with gt respect,  
JOSEPH SHIPLEY.

JOHN A. BROWN, Esq., Philadelphia.

LIVERPOOL, 8th Feb'y, 1826.

*Dear Sir:* On concluding the arrangement by which I became a partner in the concern of W. & J. Brown & Company, I was authorized to offer Mr. John Welsh one half the nett commission on any business he might send or procure for the House for one year that the business of Shipley, Welsh & Company might be immediately transferred. At the expiration of the year Mr. Welsh's business would, of course, be continued on the same terms as that of other correspondents.

He has expressed his willingness to accede to this proposal provided the house would occasionally come under engagements for him in advance to the amount of £5,000 if required.

On this subject I address you at the suggestion of Mr. Wm. Brown and by the same conveyance I informed Mr. Welsh that if any arrangement of this kind is entered into it would be through you.

I am of opinion that it is in his power to satisfy you fully on this point by a

end of 1850, he was a general partner in all the houses.<sup>1</sup> On December 31, 1850, he retired, owing to ill health. He was a great sufferer from gout, which was aggravated by the damp English climate. After his retirement he lived for many years with two maiden sisters at Wilmington, Delaware, his native city, but until his death in 1867, maintained a lively interest in the firm and its partners. When a boy I visited him at his home in Wilmington in company with my father on our way to Baltimore, and I have a very distinct recollection of his tall, stately presence.

In 1837 William E. Bowen, who had been representing the American houses in Manchester for several years, joined the firms as a partner and remained in Liverpool assisting Mr. Shipley until at Sir William Brown's suggestion he returned to this country in 1838 to visit the Southern agencies. He never went back to Liverpool, but took up his residence in Philadelphia in 1839 in charge of the Philadelphia house.

candid statement of his circumstances which I have every reason to believe is more favorable than is generally supposed.

When I have been under engagements for Mr. Welsh in advance it has always been on his advice of shipments about to be made from different parts or remittances ordered to me from the Continent, and in all instances the expectations he has held out in this way have been fully realized. In a business of more than six years' standing he has been regular, correct and liberal, and I do not know of any one transaction of his to which exception could be taken. . . .

Mr. Welsh has had at times large funds in my hands and now there is a considerable balance in his favor. When I joined him he was considered a rich man and I believe his property to be unencumbered. I do not know of any serious losses since, but as the times are critical and I cannot know the actual situation of his property, I trust he will be disposed to speak with you on the subject without reserve and I hope it may result in a satisfactory arrangement. I am,

Dr. Sir, Yours respectfully, JOS. SHIPLEY, JR.

<sup>1</sup> This, of course, excepts the Baltimore house after 1839.



With the accession of Mr. Shipley, the house gained the services of a thoroughly trained merchant. My father used to say that he wrote a better business letter and could say more to the point in a few words than any one else of his acquaintance. During the severe crisis of 1837, his exceptional qualities brought him to the front, and it was owing to his skill and management that the firm weathered so successfully the panic of that year. In recognition of his services at that time the firm name was changed, June 1, 1839, to Brown, Shipley & Company, and has remained so ever since.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. advertisement of Browns & Bowen, chapter X, p. 171.

## CHAPTER VI

### LIVERPOOL—*Continued*

#### THE PANIC OF 1837.

**I**N a previous chapter reference was made to the fact that the desire to recognize Mr. Shipley's services in connection with the panic of 1837 led to the change of the firm name to Brown, Shipley & Company. The story of those eventful days is so interesting that it deserves a special chapter.

Many causes led up to the panic of 1837, one of the severest on record in both the United States and Great Britain. Among others there were:

First:—The great absorption of capital in the United States, during the ten or fifteen years preceding 1837, in works of permanent improvement, railroads, canals, inventions of various kinds, and the great extension of agriculture.

Secondly:—The action of President Jackson in 1832 in vetoing the bill for the renewal of the charter of the Bank of the United States, and in the following year in withdrawing eight million dollars of public deposits, which compelled the Bank to curtail its discounts to such an extent as to make money for the time very tight. This was followed by the formation of a large number of

State banks, resulting in a great expansion of the currency, reckless extension of credit, and wild speculation of all kinds.

Thirdly:—A year of apparently great prosperity in 1835, inducing great extravagance both in personal and business expenditure.

Fourthly:—The great fire in New York, destroying a great amount of property.

Fifthly:—The order issued by the Treasury Department in 1836 requiring payment for public lands in gold, thus suddenly checking the wild speculation in land at fictitious prices.

Sixthly:—The short crops of 1835 and 1836, and the fact that in the spring of 1836 money became dearer, and could be had only at increasing rates, until in the early months of 1837 it was difficult to obtain it at any price.

In England also conditions were unfavorable. During the first part of the nineteenth century England had been changing from an agricultural to a manufacturing nation. For many years preceding 1837 there had been a very large absorption of capital in works of permanent improvement, canals, railroads, etc., extensive improvement in manufacturing establishments, and also the establishment of joint-stock banks. According to one authority there were no less than one hundred and two of these banks, exclusive of branches, in existence as early as 1835<sup>1</sup>, and the number

<sup>1</sup> The first to be established in London was the London & Westminster Bank, started at the end of the year 1833 and formally established in March, 1834. Before 1833, the year when the Bank of England renewed its charter, it was impossible for a joint-stock bank to carry on business within sixty miles of London, and it was in the face of the bitterest opposition, both from the Bank of England and the country banks, that the Westminster Bank was finally launched.

increased rapidly thereafter. The formation of these banks was followed by a reckless extension of credit and wild speculation. In the first three months of 1836 one hundred and four joint-stock corporations were formed in Manchester and Liverpool alone. These joint-stock corporations were founded for every imaginable object and had a capital of no less than £37,000,000.

In the United States the trouble began first in the South and Southwest. The cotton interest was prostrate. The inflation of the past three years had stimulated the production of cotton to an enormous extent, while the corresponding inflation in England had kept up the price of the great staple by stimulating manufactures. In the spring of 1837 came the reaction. The crop of 1836 could not be sold. Bankers and brokers who had made large advances upon that crop—advances proportioned to the recent high price of the article—were the first victims, and in their fall they bore down with them the entire edifice of American credit.

About the 15th of March one of the great cotton houses in New Orleans failed, followed about the 25th of March by the failure of their New York correspondents. All through the month of April failures continued at an alarming rate. Property of all kinds declined in value, and the panic extended all over the country.<sup>1</sup> Some idea of the intensity of the depression may be gained from the fact that the State of New York, for a loan not exceeding \$500,000 at 6 per cent., publicly advertised, did not receive a bid.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A brief popular account of all the financial panics, by a member of the New York Press: New York, J. C. Harvey, 1857.

Early in May a general run was made upon the banks in New York, and after deliberate consultation among their officers and directors, on the 10th of May, all the banks suspended specie payments.

James G. King, a partner of the banking house of Prime, Ward & King, a leading member and afterward President of the Chamber of Commerce, was one of the sagacious few whose voice, countenance and counsel were cheerful and hopeful. He perceived the magnitude and extent of the danger, but he believed that mutual aid and confidence would mitigate and perhaps control the evil, and his example of calm self-possession inspired others with courage. At a meeting of the merchants and traders of the city, held May 10, 1837, at the Exchange, in pursuance of a call numerously signed by leading men of all pursuits and parties, he offered resolutions to the effect that paper notes of the different banks should pass current as usual until such time as the resumption of specie payments might be found practicable. The resolutions were unanimously adopted. The sanction thus given by the leading business men to the step taken by the banks produced a salutary effect.<sup>1</sup>

Later in the year Mr. King sailed for England, and while in London arranged, on the responsibility of his firm and the guarantee of Baring Brothers & Company, for a consignment of £1,000,000 gold from the Bank of England. The first shipment was made in March, 1838,<sup>2</sup> and on

<sup>1</sup> "History of the City of New York," by Mrs. Martha Lamb, Vol. II, pp. 732, 733.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter to Mr. William Brown, dated April 24, 1838, Mr. James Brown refers to "the arrival of two steamers yesterday and . . . much specie" and states that this fact "caused quite an excitement and advance in bills and stocks, and the spirits of people seemed good in anticipation of brighter times." Mr. Brown's

Mr. King's return with the second, arrangements were made for the resumption of specie payment by the New York banks, which took place in May, 1838.<sup>1</sup>

The effect of the panic did not fully pass away until 1842. The years 1839 and 1841 were especially gloomy, the latter through the failure of the Bank of the United States<sup>2</sup> in consequence of its ill-guided endeavor to sustain the cotton interest. It was, as in so many other instances, enforced economy on the part of the people, and a return to sound business methods which brought back a period of prosperity.

In consequence of the conditions described above, the effects of which were felt most severely in England by houses connected with the American trade, Mr. Shipley, towards the middle or latter part of May, 1837, went to London from Liverpool for a conference with the firm's bankers, Denison, Heywood, Kennards & Company, and with the Governor and Directors of the Bank of England. The news of failures throughout the United States had caused great alarm, and the communication by sailing vessels was so infrequent, and during that particular year

reference to the arrival of two steamers on the same day is explained by the following extract from "The Steamship," which confirms a statement which might otherwise seem open to question: '*The Royal William*, the first steamer to cross the Atlantic, went from Pictou, N. S., to Gravesend in 1833 in 22 days. Five years later the Cork steamer *Sirius* accomplished the voyage to New York in 18 days, after burning everything on board that could feed the engines. The *Great Western*, which had been built specially for the service, reached New York on the same day, having left Bristol three days after the *Sirius*,—a passage of 14½ days.' This was two years before the establishment of a regular mail line between Great Britain and the United States.

<sup>1</sup> It was not, however, until several years later that resumption became general and permanent throughout the country.

<sup>2</sup> This was the Second Bank of the United States.

so delayed by severe storms, that it was almost impossible even for solvent firms to receive their remittances from the United States in time to meet obligations falling due in England. Mr. Shipley carried with him a statement of the capital of the firms in Liverpool and the United States as per their balance-sheet of December 31, 1836, and also a list of assets and liabilities as far as they could be ascertained as of the 27th of May. At that time it was evident from correspondence passing between the Liverpool house and Mr. Shipley that it was hoped arrangements could be made by pledging securities with their own bankers to carry the firm through without further assistance, but the news from the United States which reached Liverpool on the 29th of May<sup>1</sup> was so disastrous that all hope of such an arrangement was abandoned, and it was decided to apply to the Bank of England for help.

The letters between Mr. Shipley in London and Mr. William Brown and Mr. Bowen in Liverpool during those eventful days, a large number of which were preserved by Mr. Shipley, together with the memorandum diary of his dealings with the Bank, and copies of statements and other papers submitted to the Bank, give a vivid account of the negotiations and of their successful issue. These papers have but recently come into the writer's possession, and enable him to give for the first time the true story of the transaction.

The correspondence begins with a letter from Mr. Brown dated May 24, 1837, which suggests that the American houses could place mortgages and other property held by them against protested bills with the Bank of the

<sup>1</sup> Per packet *Roscoe*, which sailed from New York, May 6.

United States<sup>1</sup> as security for an advance from the Bank of England against protested bills, and that with the remittances expected from New York they would be provided for all engagements maturing in June. He further suggests that if these resources fail, they may get up a guarantee fund as additional security.

Accordingly, on the 1st of June, after conference with their bankers, and with their cordial approval, as they had no doubt of the entire solvency of the firm and their ability to meet every liability in time, Mr. Shipley addressed to the Bank of England the following letter:

LONDON, 1 *June*, 1857.

TO THE GOVERNOR AND BANK OF ENGLAND:

After receiving the most liberal remittances from the United States, we cannot think they would be continued to an amount equal to our wants. We find them suddenly cut off by the disastrous state of things existing there.

Up to the arrival of the last packet, we had every reason to believe that we should have been able to meet our engagements regularly without any other assistance than our own bankers are disposed to extend to us, but the intelligence received yesterday shows that remittances will be delayed and cut off to such an extent as to forbid the hope of our being sustained unless through your assistance.

We enclose a statement showing that our capital was about £1,350,000 at the end of this last year, and that our total engagements amount to about £1,372,000. Our losses cannot, of course, be stated, but as our debtors are among the best houses in America, and having partners experienced in business residing in the three principal cities where our business has been and who hold securities for a large amount of the debts, it is quite impossible that the Bank can incur any risk in carrying us through. Were it not for the disappointment we have experienced in protested bills of exchange to the amount of about

<sup>1</sup> The reference here, and in the following letters, is to the Second Bank of the United States.



£472,000, this application would not have been necessary at this time, nor perhaps at all. Of these bills, many of which are endorsed by banks, a considerable amount will be paid in part or in whole in this country. About £850<sup>1</sup> has been sent to the United States, and the remainder [is] in this country, a large proportion due in the present month. Besides the disappointment of these protested bills, we are apprehensive we may also be disappointed in receiving about £370,000 which we had every reason to expect in all the present month, but which from the disastrous accounts of yesterday we dare not now rely upon so early. We are, therefore, under the painful necessity of applying to the Bank for the assistance we need, and which may amount to the two above named sums, together about £800,000, although we trust that a much less sum will be found sufficient. It will be evident from the enclosed statements that we shall, in the worst event, have a very large capital left and we are ready to make any arrangement you propose. Besides this our bankers, Messrs. Denison & Co., are willing to commence a guarantee list by putting down their name for £50,000, which considering the engagements they are already under is as much as we can expect, and if time is allowed, we can no doubt obtain additions to it: and we have cotton at Liverpool and on the way of the value of about £150,000 which we would as soon as in our power assign over to you. We regret the necessity of pressing this upon your attention at this moment, but as our payments must be met tomorrow, without your aid we have no alternative, and so beg to refer you to the enclosed letter from our Mr. Brown who is prevented from coming to London by indisposition, and as you will therein see that about two-thirds of all our engagements arise out of the export of British manufacturers, you can readily judge what disastrous consequences would follow our stoppage at this time, and which we painfully apprehend would be more felt than that of any other house in England, and as no doubt a very large proportion of our acceptances is held by the Bank, we hope you will feel an interest and find an advantage in supporting us.

Yours very truly,

(signed) W. & J. BROWN & COMPANY

<sup>1</sup> Probably £85,000.

After a careful investigation, and with many expressions of good-will from the Governor and Deputy Governor, the Bank agreed to advance a sufficient sum to provide for the needs of the firm until the 8th, the next Court day. These advances, pending further arrangements, were made on protested bills satisfactory to the Bank at from sixteen to twenty shillings on the pound. Speaking of this arrangement, Mr. Shipley writes Mr. Brown: "They will take in the same way all we have, provided they are as unobjectionable as the present lot. The Bank views our position as altogether different from most of the others, as it really is, and when the Board adjourned last night, they authorized the Governor to loan us, as he is doing, until the next Board meet on the 8th, upon the protested bills. The Governor and Deputy Governor assured me the Bank had expressed an earnest wish to see us carried through, which they are sure can be accomplished, and that as far as they can personally do so they will aid in urging our claims. They cannot, however, at present do more than to advance on the protested bills, guarantees and any security we can give them. We have now until the eighth inclusive provided for and our next object is to arrange for renewals as far as possible of our foreign inland bills and get up a guarantee fund." He also writes: "I have told the Governor and Deputy Governor it is impossible to give any estimate of our losses. They may be 700 to 800,000 pounds or more. They say they are perfectly satisfied that in no event can our whole property be swept away. I have told John Heywood all I know of our probable losses, and he says it would be madness to stop as long as we can pay on. We have gained some

little triumph already to stand even for a week amid the general wreck, and if we can hold out I am sure you must have a good surplus left."

The days which followed were very dark, both for Mr. Shipley in London and for his partners in Liverpool. The news from the United States was, if possible, still more disquieting. Failures increased; remittances confidently expected were delayed or suspended, and the estimate of losses had to be increased. Mr. Brown especially was inclined to take a gloomy view of the situation. Scrupulously sensitive in matters of commercial honor, he preferred, if necessary, to stop payment, while there was no doubt of the solvency of the firm and their ability to meet every obligation in full, rather than to run the risk of involving friends and clients in ultimate loss. Such sentences as the following recur in his correspondence: "Certainly it is our duty, if we can, not to let the public suffer by our suspending payment, but we could never forgive ourselves if we got our bankers and other friends to commit themselves largely and then [were] obliged to stop." It appears indeed, from one of Mr. Bowen's letters to Mr. Shipley, that on one occasion Mr. Brown was so fully persuaded that it was impossible for the firm to weather the storm that he had already drawn up a notice of suspension which, needless to say, was never posted.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that Mr. Brown's fears for the solvency of the firm turned largely upon the question of the suspension of specie payments in America. He had confidence that the houses in the United States would be able to go on unless the banks were not able to continue specie payments. As a matter of fact, the event proved that his fears were unfounded. The New York banks suspended specie payments on the 10th of May, and, contrary to Mr. Brown's expectation, their suspension was followed by immediate relief. Before that time all business transactions had been at a stand-still. After the suspension, however, payments

The second or third of June brought news of the failure of three large London firms, known as the three W's.<sup>1</sup> While these failures had been anticipated, their occurrence added greatly to the difficulty of Messrs. Shipley and Bowen in securing the additional guarantees. Amid these discouraging circumstances, however, their courage and resourcefulness never failed, and they exerted themselves daily to secure additions to the guarantee fund which now became necessary, and to provide additional security to offer to the bank.

At the meeting of the Court on the 8th, Mr. Shipley laid before the Bank a later and fuller statement of the condition of the firm, giving the amount of their estimated losses as then ascertained, and their requirements for the balance of the month of June, against which they had guarantees to tender from responsible parties for more than the amount required. Again he received assurances that their payments would be cared for until the next meeting of the Court, security to be provided as before either in protested bills satisfactory to the Bank, cotton<sup>2</sup> on hand, or to arrive, and the promise of securities to be pledged both in England and the United States (the latter to be lodged with the Bank of the United States), and a

were resumed, and, while it is true that the currency was depreciated, the wheels of commerce were started again, and from that time there was gradual improvement in the United States.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, Thomas Wilson & Company, George Wilds & Company, and Timothy Wiggin & Company. They stopped payment on the second or third of June. They were in difficulty in March, but at that time had been helped by the Bank of England against a deposit of securities and probably a guarantee list, but subsequent events made it impossible for them to go on.

<sup>2</sup> Since the meeting of the Court, June 1, a considerable amount of cotton had arrived in Liverpool from the firm's correspondents in New Orleans.

guarantee list of at least £400,000 in a form satisfactory to the Bank. With this information Mr. Shipley appears to have left London on the evening of the 8th for consultation with his partners in Liverpool. There has been a story current in the firm that the first knowledge of any action by the Bank was brought by Mr. Shipley himself, who suddenly appeared before the office in Liverpool in a four-horse post-chaise. His arrival created great excitement not only in the office, but in Liverpool, and it was supposed at the time by the subordinates in the office that matters had been satisfactorily arranged. Interesting confirmation of this story has recently come to light in a letter of Mr. John Very written to his niece, Miss Very,<sup>1</sup> under date of October 5, 1901:

Did I tell you (what might be interesting to Mr. Brown) that in 1837 I was standing at my Father's shop door, when I saw coming down street at full galop a Post Chaise ('Po Chay') and four horses ridden by Post Boys all covered with mud. It stopped next door (Brown, Shipley) and out jumped Mr. Shipley all covered with glory, up went the windows in front and out popped the heads of the Clerks who gave three rousing cheers. It was the year of the panic, and Mr. Shipley had been to London to negotiate a loan with the Bank of England. He had been successful and thus saved the credit of the house. It made quite an impression upon your future Uncle, who really didn't think he would be writing to his pretty niece in the next century a description of it. You must remember it was before railroads and telegraphs and things, which accounts for the 'Po Chay.'

While the anxieties of the partners were by no means at an end, it is evident that Mr. Shipley's presence brought new hope and courage not only to Messrs. Brown and

<sup>1</sup> A friend of Mrs. John Crosby Brown.

Bowen, but to the many friends in Liverpool who had been exerting themselves for the firm's welfare. Doubtless, also, steps were taken while Mr. Shipley was there and after his return to London to substitute for the guarantee list already signed, one in the form required by the Bank, and an earnest and successful effort was made to secure additional signatures.

Mr. Shipley returned to London on the 13th, and after a busy day in conference with the firm's bankers and other parties in London, made further application to the Bank, supported by fresh facts and figures of all the firm's engagements in England and of the value of cotton to arrive, which would show that, after everything was done, there would be a surplus of \$2,000,000; whereupon the Bank, having fully considered the statement of the firm's position, agreed by unanimous vote to the application of Mr. Shipley, which was that the Bank should see the firm through to the end of the year 1837.

This answer was conveyed to Mr. Shipley at half-past three, and at four o'clock he sent off by express to Mr. Brown the following letter:

MY DEAR SIR:

LONDON, 15 June, 1837.

This will be handed you by Mr. Hallard, a friend of Messrs, Coates & Co., who has kindly volunteered to go to you express with the intelligence that *all is right* with us here, the Bank of Eng'd having undertaken to carry us through the year upon the guarantee list being made up to £400,000 (it now amounts to about £360,000), and that the Bk of England is not to be called upon to make any advances to discharge engagements or liabilities of any of our houses in America, from which it is to be understood that in event of any American inland bills on which our American names may appear coming here dishonored, the Bank is not to be bound for them.

The Governor says it is not the intention to restrict us in new business, but that it is expected that our houses will not pass any Dfts on us unless against shipments of produce, and that we will not come under any new engagements here unless upon security in goods, &c.

The Bank has behaved in the most handsome manner and the Governor in particular.

Yours truly,

(Signed) JOS. SHIPLEY.

In a further letter to Mr. Brown he writes:

It must be a gratifying thing to you and to your brothers that this passed the Board unanimously, and I never remember seeing brighter countenances than appeared in the Governor's room when he and the Deputy Governor and Mr. Palmer came from the Board. I was waiting the result in the Governor's room from half past twelve to half-past three, and had the first certain information of the result from Mr. G. . . . , who as soon as he saw how it was to be, came out to give me an intimation of it. . . . It will now be desirable to get the notes from the guarantees, and as regards the cotton it will be as well to continue to pledge it to Denison's<sup>1</sup> till I learn from the Governor tomorrow how he will wish it to be done. Of course, Denison's now hold the cotton, securities, etc. for the benefit of the Bank. Our balance sheets were not asked for. . . . Should you not write to Mr. Denison upon his liberal conduct and the exertion they have made for us? If you do, please say that I have spoken of the extraordinary interest and exertion they have used. There was great excitement here all day, and I am told the result has produced a wide and lively sensation.

On receipt of the news in Liverpool the cotton market advanced a quarter of a penny, and the town was elated by the news. The office of the firm was filled with friends offering their congratulations. A letter of Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Denison, Haywood, Kennards & Company.

Brown which conveys to Mr. Shipley his relief at the happy outcome ends with this characteristic sentence: "Not the least of my gratifications is Mr. ——'s reporting you in good spirits, and, although it endangered the negotiation falling through, it must be a pleasing reflection to us that, so far from bolstering a case up, we have made every allowance that we considered by possibility necessary, which, eventuate as it may in our receipts, it will be pleasant to reflect on."

There was still a busy week before Mr. Shipley in London, as the form of the guarantee first presented did not meet the requirements of the bank and a new form satisfactory to the bank had to be substituted. By the 22nd all had been satisfactorily arranged, and a guarantee list of £445,000<sup>1</sup> was handed to the governor, who seemed well satisfied and pleased.

November 30, Mr. Shipley was again in London to lay before the bank a proposition from Mr. Jaudon, cashier of the Bank of the United States, doubtless with the approval of the American partners, to extend the time for the payment of the loan to the firm and to substitute the guarantee of the Bank of the United States for the guarantees and securities held by that bank for the Bank of England. This proposition was promptly declined, for reasons of principle which involved no lack of confidence in the firm.

In speaking of this declination, Mr. Shipley writes: "The Governor told me that there was the most kindly feeling generally expressed at the bank towards us and great satisfaction at the state of the account, and it was

<sup>1</sup> Of this amount Denison's subscribed for over £100,000.



observed that they would rather relinquish to us all the securities held on the other side to our own management, and trust to our own honor to account with them for the proceeds than to adopt the principle of the giving of time required under the guarantee as well as that of relinquishing the guarantee notes. This they will not relinquish but suffer to lay over, and I believe it will be arranged to be done on our own application without any reference to the parties giving the notes. I then asked the Governor, 'Are we to understand from this decision that the bank wishes to hasten remittances?' 'By no means,' was the reply. 'I should be sorry to see you remitting at a great sacrifice in the way of exchange.'"

Early in the year 1838 the business of the firms began to resume its normal condition. On the 18th of January, George, from Baltimore, writes to his brother William, "You would find we have no difficulty in selling our bills anywhere. . . . Our credit is just as high as it was, and there are no regular bill sellers except ourselves in this place. . . . Indeed, we are pressed to sell more than we are desirous of, so that if James<sup>1</sup> finds them heavy, we can increase our sales." On the 30th of March, he writes to his brother, James, "The annual accounts are received. . . . The winding up of the year's business is really surprising on both sides and almost leads one to believe there is some mistake in the estimates, or that the estimates of losses are not sufficiently large. However, be that as it may, I hope by the end of the present year, we will have made all our losses fully up, and stand as well as we did December 31, 1836." These hopes were fulfilled; the

<sup>1</sup> In New York.

remaining payments due the Bank <sup>1</sup> were promptly made, and before the close of the year 1838 this interesting, if somewhat too exciting, incident in the history of Brown, Shipley & Company had closed.

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, the Bank of England. The total amount which the Bank of England came under obligation to advance to the firm was £1,950,000. Of this, £1,100,000 was to cover their liabilities for acceptances and book debts, and the remaining £850,000 for other liabilities on endorsements. These were the obligations of the Liverpool firm alone. The Bank did not become responsible for any of the obligations of the American firms. They were able to take care of themselves. It is an interesting fact that, when the Liverpool accounts were finally closed, the loss incurred in connection with this large sum was found to amount to but £17,892.7.6.

## CHAPTER VII

### LIVERPOOL—*Continued*

1839-1889. BROWN, SHIPLEY & Co. THE PANIC OF 1857. THE CIVIL WAR. OPENING OF THE LONDON OFFICE.

**T**O secure a good commercial education in the early days young men were apprenticed by articles of indenture to prominent merchants, and were obliged to serve for a definite number of years, usually five. Among those who were thus indentured to the Liverpool Office was Francis Alexander Hamilton. In a letter dated January 12, 1900, Mr. Hamilton writes: "I entered the office of William & James Brown & Company as a boy in 1832, Mr. Shipley being then the active partner, and served my five years' apprenticeship. In September, 1837, I went out to New Orleans to try and push my fortune. Being offered business by two leading Manchester firms if I would go to Savannah, I took up my residence in that city in September, 1839. Mr. George Cumming was then the agent for Brown, Shipley & Company, but the Exchange business with that place having virtually dropped to nil, Mr. [William] Brown in a conversation on the Liverpool Exchange, asked me if I could explain the cause, and [if] I thought I could bring more life into it. I told him that I felt pretty sure I could



**Mr. Francis Alexander Hamilton**

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do [so]. He wrote to Mr. James Brown respecting me, and I was made the agent of the firm in November of 1839. The business immediately increased under my management without a single loss during the years 1839 to 1845. The Exchange business [was] at that time in clean bills at that port, the B/Lading system not being in existence till near the latter period.

“In May, 1845, I received a letter from Mr. James Brown offering me a partnership if I would return to Liverpool without much delay, as Mr. Shipley’s health was not satisfactory, and he and his brother wished to relieve him in the work. I returned home early in June and became a partner on July 1, 1845.”

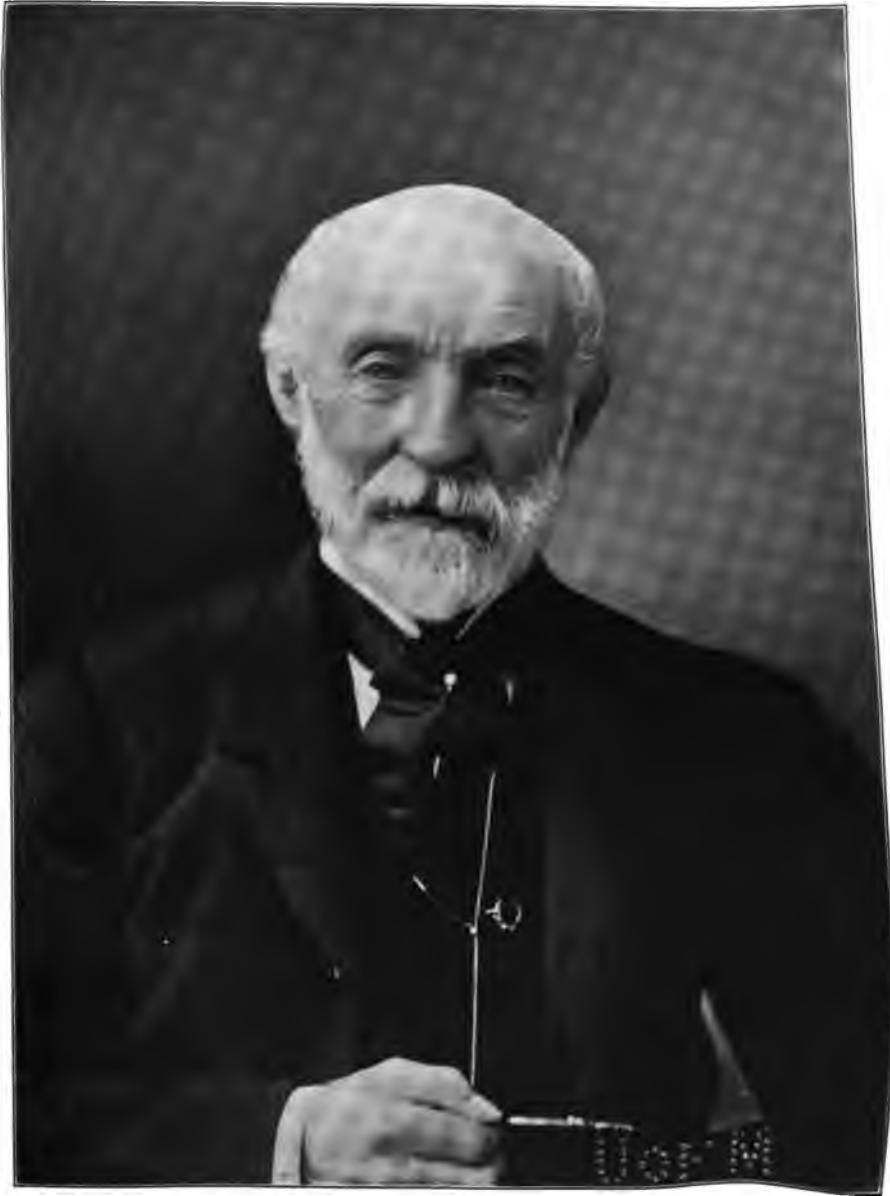
Before going to New Orleans, however, and after serving his apprenticeship, it appears that Mr. Hamilton entered the office of William Stuart in Liverpool to learn about Sea Island cotton, intending to have gone to Savannah as Stuart’s agent there, but, on Stuart’s failure, he went to New Orleans on his own account, as already mentioned.

In 1847, to give additional help to Messrs. Shipley and Hamilton, George Alexander Brown, a younger brother of Stewart Brown of New York, joined the office and received power to sign for the firm per procuracy, a position which he held until his death, May 11, 1870. Mr. Brown, like his brother Stewart, received his business training in Baltimore in the office of Alexander Brown & Sons, remaining there until about 1825.<sup>1</sup> He and a friend

<sup>1</sup> He describes his life as follows: “In the summer time I used to open the warehouse at five o’clock, and in the winter at seven, and in the busy season we were often kept till midnight.”

together then chartered a schooner and freighted it with goods likely to sell in Mexico. He arrived there after an adventurous voyage, having been chased for three days by a pirate. He went to England in 1830, and was for a time engaged in the Mexican trade, and afterwards was a stock-broker until 1847, when he entered the service of Brown, Shipley & Company. As an indication of the changes that have taken place in comparatively recent times, his son writes: “[My father] was [present] as an invited guest on the first train which ran from Liverpool to Manchester. This was in 1831, and it was on that occasion that Mr. Huskisson was killed by a shunting engine while he was talking, he having got out of his carriage while the train was at one of the intervening stations. . . . He [*i. e.*, Mr. George Brown] was also with Stevenson on the first engine which made a trial run the year before the line was opened for traffic.”

After William Brown entered Parliament as member for South Lancashire in 1846, the management of the business fell largely into the hands of Messrs. Shipley and Hamilton, and a warm friendship grew up between the two men, which continued after Mr. Shipley's retirement from the firm. Mr. Hamilton frequently consulted Mr. Shipley in matters of business, and the letters which we shall have occasion to cite in connection with the panic of 1857 show the high value which he set upon Mr. Shipley's judgment, and the extent to which his counsel was sought by all the members of the firm. It was a source of profound grief to Mr. Shipley that at the outbreak of the Civil War the sympathies of the English aristocratic and mercantile classes, and among them his old Liverpool friends, were in



**Sir Mark Wilks Collet, Bart.**



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great measure with the Southern cause. His friendship with Mr. Hamilton, however, was in no way affected by the views so generally entertained in England. An interesting correspondence exists between the two men, in which Mr. Shipley explains at length his views of the justice of the Northern cause and expresses his regret that the real nature of the issue should be so little understood in England.

After Mr. Shipley's retirement from ill health in 1850 it was necessary to find some one to take his place. Mr. Mark Wilks Collet was selected for the place, and he became a partner on July 1, 1851. By a very varied experience, both in commercial and financial matters, as well in the United States as in England, he was thoroughly equipped for the post; indeed, he was one of the best-informed men on all commercial and banking matters that I have ever met. He was a thorough master of French and German, and able to carry on conversation on business matters in both languages. In a letter dated January, 1900, Mr. Collet says:

I was taken to Liverpool in June 1832 by Mr. Henry Patry to learn business in his house, Henry Patry & Co., a branch of Thomas Wilson & Co. of London, whose name was adopted for the Liverpool branch a year or two later, when it became Thomas Wilson & Co., although a distinct partnership, Mr. Patry being partner only in the Liverpool firm; so that when, in the great crisis of 1837, the three great American houses in London—Thomas Wilson & Co., Geo. Wildes & Co., and Timothy Wiggin & Co.—went down, the Liverpool house of Thomas Wilson & Co. remained solvent and liquidated, and the firm of Purton, Parker & Co. was formed to take up the business. I continued with them as a clerk, but they were not successful, and it was, I think, in 1840 that I accompanied Mr.

Purton to the United States to try to recover some of the reclamations on cotton consignments that were due to the firm in Georgia and New Orleans, but with so little result that after a second fruitless winter spent in the U. S., I urged Mr. Purton to give up the House and turn to something else. His old friend Mr. Joshua Bates offered him a position, which afterwards was made a partnership, in his Liverpool firm of Baring Bros. & Co., which he held until his death not many years after. I was left stranded in my mercantile career, but was offered the post of sub-manager in the Bank of Liverpool, which I accepted and held until 1848 (making valuable friends and gaining useful knowledge and experience), when Mr. J. W. Cater offered me to be his partner in London, where we carried on a West India business, which led to my visiting the West India Islands for two consecutive winters, returning by way of New York. It was, I suppose, in 1849 that Mr. Cater took over the New York firm of Aymar & Company, which Mr. Gaillard and myself conducted until 1851, when I joined B. S. & Company in Liverpool.

To still further strengthen the Liverpool house, Stewart Henry Brown, son of Stewart Brown, who, after graduating from Columbia College in 1851, had spent some time in the New York office, was sent to Liverpool in 1856, and on the 21st of January became a partner.

After the closing of the Mobile agency, owing to the Civil War in 1861, and after his return to England, Herman Hoskier, resident agent in Mobile, was, owing to the illness of Messrs. Hamilton and Collet, asked to remain in Liverpool to assist Stewart Henry Brown, signing for the firm by procuracy, and, in 1864, he followed Mr. Collet to London to open the London house.

At the time of William Brown's settlement in Liverpool, and during his whole business career, London was, as it is now, the financial centre of Great Britain, and sterling



**Mr. George Alexander Brown**



**Mr. Egerton Stewart Brown**



**Mr. James Haldane Heriot**



drafts and acceptances under sterling credits, though drawn on Liverpool, were usually made payable in London. Arrangements had, therefore, to be made at an early day for an account with some London bank, where the acceptances of the firm could be paid. Those were the days of private bankers. Modern limited liability concerns, with enormous deposits and capital, had not yet come into existence. As far as I can learn (and Messrs. Collet and Hamilton are my authorities for the statement), the earliest bank account opened by William Brown was with Messrs. Moss & Company, private bankers in Liverpool, who doubtless had some London connection. How long the account remained there it is now impossible to ascertain, but it was afterwards transferred to Messrs. Joseph Denison & Company, of London, probably through the intervention of Mr. Heywood—a banker in Liverpool and a friend of William Brown. Subsequently the firm became Denison & Company. Later the last of the Denisons took for his partner J. P. Heywood, and later still two Kennards, sons of an old confidential clerk, and the firm became Denison, Heywood, Kennards & Company, and on the death of Mr. Denison, Heywood, Kennards & Company. The firm continued until December 31, 1863, when, as was the case with many of the other old private banking firms, it was merged into the Consolidated Bank—a combination of the private banks of the Messrs. Hankey & Heywood with the Manchester Joint Stock Bank. Until 1863, therefore, all drafts drawn by the American houses on either William and James Brown & Company, or Brown, Shipley & Company (unless indicated for payment elsewhere), and all drafts



under credits opened in the United States on the Liverpool firm, as well as all drafts drawn by travellers under circular letters of credit, were made payable either on the face or in the body of the draft itself, in London, and were all paid through the Messrs. Denison and their successors.

The two most important events during the period covered by the present chapter were the panic of 1857 and the Civil War. Unlike the panic of 1837, that of 1857 was weathered by the firm without difficulty. Interesting glimpses of the conditions in Liverpool during that eventful period appear in the following letters from Mr. Hamilton to Mr. Shipley:

MY DEAR SIR:

LIVERPOOL, Oct. 28, 1857.

Times have come upon us such as I must confess I was not prepared for, tho' I could not but think for some time past a clearance was approaching and from this side we have accordingly again and again been urging the necessity of realizing all lock-ups and getting ourselves into position to meet anything that might happen, and I flatter myself that the course pursued has not altogether been without its benefit. . . . I believe few houses are entitled to a higher position, and looking at the difficulties that now embarrass American affairs with a calm mind, I see nothing to create the alarm that seems to have pressed on Mr. James Brown and his brother, Mr. John A. Brown. The affairs of 1837 are very different from the present. Protested bills to an enormous amount were thrown back on the Liverpool House, much accommodation paper was passing all round, whereas now I see no ground for apprehending any amount of protested paper on this side, and further, so far as we are concerned, every bill on us is against a legitimate business transaction. We hold bills receivable of an undoubted character sufficient to carry us into December. The engagements of the American firms are next to nothing. Tho' money here is worth 8% as a minimum, there is no difficulty in obtaining it, nor do I apprehend there will be a time for some time to come that such

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bills cannot be discounted at some price, for tho' there undoubtedly is undue individual speculation there appears to be no general or public undertakings of that magnitude to cause panic here. The Bank Act works admirably, and is now so well understood that notwithstanding the odium that attaches to it in many quarters I am satisfied it has and will have a most conservative influence in preventing undue speculation. Though many of our correspondents have required accommodation yet they have for the most part not only given ample security but struggled manfully to pay up so far as they could, and their settlements in cash have been to a large amount and now they will undoubtedly be in a measure relieved from the great pressure by the suspension of the banks throughout the country and by the arrival of gold from California to this country. So far as I know, our only very serious losses are one of £10 to £15,000 for a loan on some stock in New York and ——'s business. The latter will, I fear, be a large affair as they owe us some £80,000 on which we may probably lose £30/n to £40,000 . . . but with the credit of the house as high or higher than ever, with the crops now on the point of coming to market, speedy intercourse between the two countries, I cannot but believe we shall easily overcome our present annoyances. . . . From your knowledge of me, you are aware that I am neither speculative nor over sanguine, but I feel that this is not a time to give place to undue fears and apprehensions, but to look the difficulties calmly and cheerfully in the face, and with God's help, we fear not the result. . . .

Yours very truly,

F. A. HAMILTON.

MY DEAR SIR:

LIVERPOOL, Nov. 23, 1857.

Feeling that you will be anxious to know how we are getting on in these troublesome times I write a few lines to inform you that everything is progressing favorably and at no time did the house stand higher than at present. The papers would advise you of the suspension of the Bank Charter, the failure of ——, and the embarrassment of —— together with stoppage of two Glasgow banks, the advance in discounts to ten per cent and the general panic. During the whole

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of this we have maintained our position well and have escaped losses by protested bills wonderfully. The total lock-ups from the cause being £60,000, of which we have only about £20,000 from which we can sustain any ultimate loss, the balance being on the Scotch banks. We are provided up to the end of December within about £100,000. We never were so free of Bills on the Anglo-American houses, and I feel confidence in saying what I before wrote, that we shall safely weather the storm, . . . and that the house will stand as high or higher than it ever did, and deeply thankful ought we to be for our preservation in the midst of so much ruin.

We have given a guarantee for £15,000 to — but as this secured the payment of this amount of bills on him, we thought well on public grounds to give this guarantee to prevent further panic. Even if he had gone we do not think we should have had a more serious lock-up than about £16,000, so that really we felt in a very independent position, and it is very questionable if — will now avail of our guarantee. . . . If he chooses to return our guarantee so much the better.

I think we have seen the worst here. Engagements are decreasing on all sides and people settling down to low prices. The profits for some time have been large so that there has been a good deal to pull on. We are sure to have individual failures, however, from the heavy losses on produce, say, £5 per bale on cotton, £40 per bale on silk, &c., &c.,

Yours very truly,

F. A. HAMILTON.

MY DEAR SIR:

LIVERPOOL, 8 Decr. 1857.

I received your note of 19th ulto. by this vessel, and I am happy to inform you that everything in our business is going on as satisfactorily as could be hoped. Remittances are coming forward freely and the principal part that was under protest has been paid either by drawers or indorsers so that the amount of protested paper held by us is now quite a small matter. The Financial Crisis so far as England and America are directly interested appears to have passed, and though we shall doubtless have individual failures, yet I do not apprehend any serious further embarrassment to trade. The position of the Bank of England is daily improving, engagements are running off,

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and I anticipate we shall see a much easier state of the money market after the turn of the year, and so far as I am concerned I feel much less anxiety about business than I did before the panic came, for I never could hide from myself the dangers that appeared to me inevitable from the general expansion and apparent undue prosperity that existed. The position held by the house through the whole crisis has been so strong that any rumors that existed were only for a moment and only sufficient to meet with contradiction from their own absurdity. American matters seem to be mending fast. The *Adriatic* arrived safely and she certainly is a magnificent vessel, but there has been an awful waste of money on her. I understand the U. States Government have themselves broken the contract by not allowing postage money for the *Ericson*. If this be so, I am satisfied the wise course will be to throw up the contract and sell the boats for the most they will bring. They must lose money every trip they run and at the end of the contract the boats will certainly be much deteriorated. So long as they run there will be nothing but trouble to Mr. James Brown and loss to all concerned. The passage money must inevitably be reduced in the spring to meet the screw boats and it would be the best news I could hear, that Mr. James Brown had decided to run the boats no more. It is however not worth troubling you about such things.

Mrs. Hamilton begs her kindest regards and with the same from myself in which I am,

Yours very truly,

F. A. HAMILTON.

The panic of 1857 was followed four years later by the Civil War. The proclamation of neutrality, issued by the English Government, led to serious differences of opinion between the Liverpool and New York partners about the proper course to pursue in the management of the business. With one exception, the partners in Liverpool were British subjects and were unwilling to undertake any business which involved the violation of the terms of the neutrality

proclamation, such as the shipment to either belligerent of articles contraband of war. On the other hand, the partners in New York were strong Northern men and anxious to assist their government as far as possible in the purchase of arms and munitions of war from England and the Continent. It is only right to say, also, that the English partners took a very much more correct view of the gravity of the crisis and the probable duration of the war than those in America, who at that time were confident that the contest would be over within a year.

The view of the English partners appears clearly from the following letter, evidently written by Mr. Hamiton:

*Private.*

LIVERPOOL, August 7, 1861.

MESSRS. BROWN BROTHERS & Co.,  
New York.

*Dear Sirs:* We have not touched on political matters of late, feeling how difficult it was to form even an idea of the future that could be expressed with any degree of confidence. Now, however, as you are granting some large Credits which cannot be availed of for some considerable time, we think it but right to give our opinions for what they may be worth in respect to the future course of our business in Credits. We may premise by saying that Mr. Collet does not take as gloomy a view of the future as that held by Mr. S. H. Brown and the writer, and he before leaving home expressed, as we understood him, his concurrence in the course of granting Credits to first class people considered to be at the present time responsible on their own merits.

We mention this on the ground that the opinion of all the partners should be fully known and appreciated and we shall send a copy of this to him that he may make any comments on the matter now under discussion.

I think the writer has before expressed to you the opinion which he has entertained from the commencement of this unfortunate

separation of the Northern and Southern States, that this separation was final; that the decision to separate had been growing and increasing with an intensity of feeling for years and that no earthly power could reunite the two sections, but that the South were in earnest and would resist to the death. So far these opinions have been confirmed and the writer believes as strongly as he believes anything that the conquering of a country like the Southern States, if the people be true to themselves, is an utter impossibility. The country consisting of Pine Barrens, swamps and every difficulty to embarrass an enemy will enable a small population in earnest to defy the world. The defeat lately sustained was anticipated by many here and it appears to us clear that the supposed advantages gained were merely traps to draw the Northern troops within the range of the guns of the Southern strongholds. We believe it to be impossible to drive the enemy back from their fortification, but even supposing this accomplished, he only retires through a friendly county to take up a fresh position farther removed from the frontier. Then as to taking the Southern Ports, how is it to be done? Take for instance Savannah; from Pulaski the distance is twenty miles within range of guns planted in swamps and cane breaks (*vic*) that no hostile force could approach, the river winding in such a manner that any ship approaching would be continually under the fire of single heavy guns that nothing could touch in return; and almost all the rivers have the same advantage for defence. Looking at these things, how is the South with an active people to be conquered, unless indeed, tempted by a little prosperity, they turn their tactics from defence to aggression. Then indeed the result may be different, but we imagine their commanding officer is too good a General for this. Then if reconquering the country is impossible, is the North to give in? The belief of the writer is that eventually this will be the result, but it will take a long time to persuade the North to this, and the very defeat that has been sustained will stir up a brave and energetic people to make more sacrifices, raise more money and prepare for a long and disastrous contest. What must be the effect of this, and who can look without much anxiety to the effects of large masses of people out of work during the coming winter and a disastrous war entailing on thousands ruin and disappointment?

Supposing one or more defeats, who can foresee the moral effect? The blockade must be imperfect and Southern Privateers tempted by their late successes will increase and Messrs. ——— and ——— may find it next to impossible to cover the war risks just at the time they intend to effect them. If you are satisfied as to the power to suppress outbreaks from a people heretofore under little restraint, when suffering from poverty and disappointment, and at the same time to carry out the blockade with efficiency and bring the war to a happy termination, you will doubtless think that it is not well to stop granting to good people "now" Credits spreading over a lengthened period, but the writer does not feel this confidence and his view would be to grant no such Credits and to do no business that does not speedily wind itself up, until we can see more clearly what is before us. Who can tell what will become of either Messrs. ——— or ——— by July 1862, the limit to the Credit? You must not consider this as in any way wishing to interfere with your views as to the proper course of action, as these opinions may be worthless, but being entertained by the writer he does not think he would be justified in not candidly stating them, but only as an individual opinion and as such to have such weight as you may think it deserves.

Yours truly,

(Sgd) BROWN, SHIPLEY & Co.

In the above remarks on the policy which we ought to adopt in our business, I quite agree, tho' I so much hope for an entire reconstruction or rather resumption of supremacy by the Federal authorities over the whole territory that I am unwilling to concede that the task of recovery is at all a hopeless one. Still I should be glad to rest from such business altogether for the present. (Sgd) S. H. BROWN.

Mr. Collet, who was absent at the time this letter was written, writes, two days later, to Mr. Stewart Henry Brown expressing his concurrence in the policy proposed by Mr. Hamilton. While he is inclined to take a more optimistic view than his partners, the difference is only one of



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degree. He agrees with Mr. Hamilton that if the intention is "to subjugate the South and compel the seceding states contrary to their own wish and will to return into the Union . . . the North have engaged in . . . a visionary, impracticable enterprise which can only end in defeat and serious injury to the best interests of both North and South."

I confess [he goes on] that all the evidence that has reached me through various sources tends to the belief that if any anterior Union feeling did exist at the South, it has been extinguished by what Southerners all regard as the violent aggression of the North in taking up arms to enforce the Union, and if this be so, then there is an end of the only rational policy upon which (in my humble judgment) the war can be carried on with any hope of success. . . .

Looking at the facts that in the United States—unlike older countries having privileged classes and a landed aristocracy and gentry who may be comparatively unaffected by the war—*every interest* must suffer seriously, except the small one which benefits by disbursing the war expenses, that in a country where the popular voice of even the lowest classes has so dominant an influence, it will be dangerous to provoke discontent by allowing the working orders to be exposed to unaccustomed privations, and that the whole Northern cotton spinning interest is dependent for its very existence (far more than in Europe) upon a supply of Southern cotton—I cannot bring myself to believe that the policy of subjugation (I use the term technically for convenience) can stand the severe tests to which it must speedily be brought, and am inclined to believe that if in the course of the next few months the North does not achieve some signal military successes and thereby evoke the alleged latent Union sentiment in such manner as to bring back the South of its own free will—then there will arise in the North such discontent under its own sufferings as will lead to some accommodation.

As regards the effect these views should have on the policy of our business, I wish to premise that I feel for myself that (however much I might differ from my partners' views) under such unexampled



circumstances the views of the most restrictive and conservative member of the house ought to prevail.

I have thought that if the North did not purpose to carry the policy of subjugation à l'outrance, then we might go on granting credits for the necessaries of life, which must find a consumptive market, to the really responsible of our customers, and even if the war were protracted, I cannot but think that coffee, tea, sugar, dress, &c. must be imported, and that some people must do the business, and that the war risk will be taken by responsible offices at some *premiums*. Still my opinion only goes the length of assenting to the limited granting of credits, if it be thought wise, but that, as before said, I should far prefer concurring in the view of the more restrictive of my partners than urging my own. I must acknowledge, however, that there is one element not referred to by Mr. Hamilton which makes me increasingly inclined to the most prudent course. If the President really intends to act upon the authority given him by Congress to collect the duties at the Southern ports in ships of war stationed outside, whilst the ports are in possession of the secessionists, it cannot fail to lead to conflict with European powers and may bring on a general war. Here is a danger which would touch us directly, and in view of which (if it is to be apprehended) I would prefer to have no distant engagements outstanding.

It is difficult to know how to act in ignorance of what the real aims and policy of the Washington cabinet are, but it has occurred to me that this authority may be intended possibly as a cover to withdraw from the blockade, which is as injurious to the North almost as to the South, but that the attempt to collect duties in violation of the rights of neutrals will not be attempted. Our partners in New York, however, should look this matter fairly in the face, for a collision with France and England, in addition to the intestine war, would indeed render all business most hazardous, and reviewing all the circumstances of the case, I shall be well content to see our credit business suspended for a time, unless the New York house see their way out of the difficulties Mr. Hamilton has pointed out, and those I have just adverted to. . . .

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) M. W. COLLET.

In view of this serious difference of opinion as to policy, it was specially fortunate that at this critical period Mr. James Brown was in Europe, much of the time in Paris, in close touch with Mr. Dayton, the American Minister to France. He kept up a constant correspondence not only with his brother William, but also with the Liverpool and New York houses, and with many of the partners on both sides, and it was owing to his calm and judicious letters that matters were finally adjusted to the satisfaction of all parties.

In August, 1861, he writes to his son John: "I enclose a letter for Brown Brothers & Company with my views. I fear from the temper of the North a servile insurrection will be the result, and, if so, there is no knowing what ruin will overtake the North as well as the South, hence B. B. & Co. cannot be too prudent and cautious, for in the end we may be embroiled with European powers and our property at sea have a poor chance of escape, capture and loss. As a matter of humanity might not France and England interfere to prevent such a catastrophe to the world? This is too fearful an event to contemplate with any composure, and yet we know not what end God has in view in permitting this Civil War to be inaugurated by the South."

In the same strain he writes a few weeks later to Brown Brothers & Company, under date of September 27, 1861:

The more and the further I see of the progress of this war, the bitterness of feeling which exists at the South which is rousing up more or less of the same at the North, the more discouraged I feel for the future of our distressed country. The South are fighting for their *domestic institution* which unites them in the main, the North for our

Constitution which sits lightly on vast numbers of our Northern men, as is witnessed by the numerous arrests making, all of which increases the *bitterness*, the *usual accompaniment* of Civil War, and this feeling will exist long after the War is over, let it end as it may. As I have always said, the War we are now engaged in was *inevitable* unless the North were disposed to submit to be browbeaten and kicked and cuffed by the South and feel that the constitution under which we have lived and prospered for some 80 years was not worth a struggle to maintain it, but how our people [in the] North accustomed to much prosperity and comfort will bear the reverses which War brings in its train I do not know. That is yet to be tried.

Mr. Brown's conservatism, however, was not carried so far as to allow him to imperil the interests of others, for on October 21, 1861, we find him writing from Paris as follows: "There is such a thing in business as being over-careful and over-suspicious of the integrity of parties with whom we are dealing; it makes the house unpopular. Better to be taken in and lose a little occasionally than to be so rigid as to make parties afraid to approach you."

A visit by Mr. Hamilton to the United States in the autumn of 1861, undertaken, I believe, at Mr. James Brown's suggestion, was also of great service in giving the English partners a clearer view of the situation in America. While there, he visited the different houses and agencies, and came into personal contact not only with the partners and agents, but also with their clients. These conferences did more to remove misunderstanding than reams of correspondence.

Writing from New York on the 28th of September to Mr. Collet, Mr. Hamilton expresses himself gratified with the result of his business conversations with reference to

the various accounts, but states he has not been there long enough to form any opinion on the different matters which require consideration and for which he specially went out. He says that Mr. Stewart Brown is still very sanguine that the war will come to an end in January, but that he can as yet see no good reason for such an opinion. He speaks as though there was an absence of all excitement, and says that people were all talking of the extravagance of the government and of the corruption of the public officials and contractors, and he is much afraid the war will last as long as the money lasts. In a later letter, also to Mr. Collet, he expresses his belief that this visit will do good in tending to remove some of the unpleasant feeling existing. He says Mr. Dickey falls in with his views readily.

On October 22, 1861, he writes as follows to Messrs. Brown, Shipley & Company, Liverpool:

My views on the position of this country are somewhat modified since my arrival in reference to the danger to be apprehended from popular tumults. The fact is, so long as the war continues, occupation is found for a large proportion of the most reckless portion of the population of the towns at good wages in the Army. The pay of a private is \$13 per month and rations, which he can draw in kind or in money of the value of \$12 per month, so that his actual earnings are equal to \$25. Not bad wages for a working man. Besides this, the people see the necessity of contributing liberally to the support of the destitute during the coming trouble. I wrote to Collet from Washington, and my own views with respect to the duration of the war are not altered, believing as I do that both parties are determined and that it will require considerable time to so discipline the troops on each side as to give their Generals sufficient confidence to act on the offensive unless forced into an attack by some accident. With respect

to the Naval expedition now proceeding to the South, nothing as to its actual destination is known, and it is yet to be seen what will be the result. Any sudden or great success might change the whole character of the war, but in my opinion the probabilities of disaster to the attacking force are quite as likely as those of success.

Under any circumstances I am strongly under the impression that no cotton will be exported from the South this year and I only wish I could see any probability of any going forward for several months to come, but I cannot.

The intensity of feeling caused by the seizure of Messrs. Mason and Slidell is vividly portrayed in the following correspondence between Messrs. Brown, Shipley & Company and the New York firm:

*S. Glasgow*

LIVERPOOL, *Novr. 27, 1861.*

MESSRS. BROWN BROTHERS & Co., New York.

*Dear Sirs:* The West India Mail Steamer *La Plata* has arrived at Southampton today, and brings the news of the American War Steamer *San Jacinto* having boarded the branch Mail Steamer *Trent* on her voyage from Havana, to St. Thomas, and taken from her by force Messrs. Mason & Slidell, the Confederate Commissioners. This is considered a very high handed measure, and the state of excitement here is such as we never before witnessed. An indignation meeting has been called and it is probable very strong speeches will be made. We think such a meeting, to say the least of it, is very injudicious, as it is the Government who must decide as to the course that will be pursued by this country, and until they have expressed what course of action is to be followed, no good is likely to come from a meeting called without due reflection. We cannot hide from ourselves that the most serious consequences may arise from this act of the United States Government, and when we think that this act has followed so rapidly on Mr. Seward's proclamation to the different States, to fortify their Harbours, we cannot but fear that the American Government has no indisposition to risk a war with this country.

Under the circumstances it is thought desirable by Mr. James Brown and ourselves (Mr. Brown<sup>1</sup> being unwell at home we have not been able to consult him) that it is better to *open no credits of any description*, until we can judge better what is to grow out of this unfortunate affair, and further that the Havana Agency had better be entirely suspended for the present. If you can obtain instructions from the parties on whose account we have opened credits for use in the East for us to cancel them in case we should on receipt of your answer to this or afterwards see good grounds for believing in a war between our two countries, it will be well for each House to send through you to us letters to this effect to the parties using the credits. We are fully aware of the difficulty and annoyance of opening and cancelling credits and suspending contemplated agencies, but in such times when it is impossible to see what a day may bring forth, we do not see how it is to be avoided.

The Funds have declined  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$ %.

Yours truly,

BROWN SHIPLEY & Co.

Since writing the preceding we learn that the meeting has terminated, and, several parties having expressed the opinion that it is not certain that the United States Government have overstepped the law, modified resolutions to those at first proposed were carried. The share market has improved 10% from the lowest point and Consols close a shade firmer. Opinions as to the legality of the act seem to be much divided, but the improved tone in the markets leads to the impression that the more general feeling is in favor of its legality.

With these general views we leave you to act as you may think best, and we will keep you posted with the best information we can obtain.

B. S. & Co.

*Private*

MESSESS. BROWN BROTHERS & Co.,

LIVERPOOL, Nov. 30, 1861.

New York.

*Dear Sirs:* We much regret to say that political matters look even more gloomy than when we last addressed you. After mature consideration, though not officially announced, it is known that this Government have arrived at the conclusion that the proceedings of the Captain

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.*, Mr. William Brown.

of the *San Jacinto* are in direct violation of all International Law, and with this view, that England has no course left her but to demand from the United States Government an ample and satisfactory apology.

We greatly fear this may not be given, and in that case, we see nothing but the renewal of the horrors of war. It is not for us to enter into a discussion on the merits of this unfortunate complication, but with the strong views entertained heretofore by the United States on the subject of the Right of Search, we cannot but think the capture of Messrs. Mason & Slidell dearly bought under the circumstances. It is affirmed that orders go to Lord Lyons to return home, should the United States Government not meet England in a friendly spirit. Under these unfortunate circumstances, it is thought by all the Partners here, that until you are satisfied that peace will be confirmed between the two countries, it will be the only safe and prudent course to suspend *all Credits*, and to get all parties to whom Credits have been granted to authorize us to cancel them by Telegram or otherwise.

It is also thought advisable that the Amount standing at the credit of our Mr. Collet and Mr. Hamilton in your private Books should at once be transferred to the Liverpool Books. Should war unfortunately take place, so many complications will arise that it is impossible to foresee what course will have to be adopted, and the question has been raised whether it may not become necessary to separate the English and American Houses, though this is of course only an idea at present. We believe that this Government and people are disposed to make every allowance for the difficult position in which the United States are unfortunately placed, and that their determination and wish is to act the strictly neutral part, and at the same time to look with [out] temper at the unfortunate circumstance that appears so likely to embroil the two countries. We sincerely trust a conciliatory spirit may pervade the two Governments and that a better understanding may spring out of what now looks like a most untoward event. We ask your best consideration of all these points, as well as the expression of your views on them and hoping you will do all in your power to assist in bringing about a good understanding between the two countries. We are,

Yours truly,

(Sgd) BROWN, SHIPLEY & Co.

The same mail carried the following letter from Mr. James Brown:

LIVERPOOL, 30 Nov. 1861.

MESSEES. BROWN BROTHERS & Co.,

*Gent:* This Steamer will take out the news of the press, which is supposed and believed to be in accordance with the opinion of the law officers of the Crown, that the boarding of the Mail Steamer *Trent* by orders from the Captain of an American Man of War, and taking passengers out of her, is contrary to the Law of Nations, and that an apology for the outrage on the British Flag and (I suppose) restitution of the persons taken will be demanded from the Federal Govt. It seems to be admitted that the *Frigate* had a right to board her and any other vessel, and, if contraband of war was found on board (or perhaps even suspected to be on board), she should have been taken possession of, sent to the nearest port, and the case tried before a prize court, or court of admiralty having jurisdiction in such cases, and if articles contraband found on board, the vessel and all contraband articles would be condemned as a lawful prize, but that it cannot for one moment be admitted that the Captain of an armed vessel shall be permitted to board and take passengers from under the British flag, and I have not a doubt that war will ensue unless restitution and a suitable apology is made. The question naturally occurs, are passengers accredited as acting for the Confederate States still considered Rebels by the U. S. Government, articles contraband of war. There seems to be but one sentiment on this side, and unless *yourselves and other leading houses take a decided stand and use all the influence you can to operate on the Government to avoid war*, it may occur and will be disastrous beyond measure to the Northern States, and beyond all question throw Maryland and Virginia<sup>1</sup> into the Southern Confederacy. There is one circumstance that seems to be overlooked in the United States, and that is that the Government do not acknowledge a Southern Confederacy as a power, but are merely putting down a rebellion. It thence follows that unless they considered themselves at war with a power recognized by them as such, the right to board and

<sup>1</sup> Probably the reference is to West Virginia.



search for contraband of war is an infringement of the acknowledged law of nations. It would be utterly impossible to have done any act more favorable to the Southern Confederacy than the taking of Mr. Slidell and Mr. Mason, except the greater folly which they may commit of refusing to make restitution and apology. We need sadly wise and cool heads at Washington. What could be more uncalled for than Seward's circular to the different States to put their Seaboard and Lake fortifications in order, when Congress would so soon be in session. This was followed by large orders either from Government or individuals for salt petre. I can hardly bring myself to believe that these measures were taken in view of a war with England to get out of the lesser difficulty he finds himself in, in bringing back the Southern States into the Union. I however have no *confidence in Seward* and never had, considering him a reckless politician, . . . so that it seems very important that the *Bankers and Merchants make themselves heard*.

There is another subject which I think should be brought before the Merchants perhaps thro' the Chambers of Commerce, and that is the confiscation act: during the civil wars in England I believe no confiscations were made but of the property of the leaders or those found with arms in their hands. I do not know exactly how far the confiscation of the Federal Government extended, but the Southern act confiscating all property of persons residing in the Northern States, although British or French subjects, makes parties here exceedingly sensitive as to the treatment of British property in the United States in event of war. I feel, and have always felt, that the act of confiscation passed by the last Congress was most unwise. The amount obtained under it must have been a mere trifle compared with the amount of capital which left the country in consequence, thus weakening the resources of the country, as money is the sinews of war. In passing through London, our Banks told me there was a good deal of anxiety amongst persons holding American Securities. I expressed the firm conviction, which I still hold, that property of foreigners in our funds or other securities would be perfectly safe in any event, but if some declaration of opinion [were made] by our Chambers of Commerce, better still by Congress when assembled, to quiet this feeling, it would be [for] the interest of the United States. Enemies' property

here has never been disturbed, the more of it invested here the better, and the same rule holds good with us, but our Southern deluded friends have gone so much further, persons here are alarmed lest the North should commit the same folly.

The first result of the seizure of the passengers on the *Trent* has been an order in council prohibiting the exportation of salt petre, and if arms are not included, they may be. France will no doubt take the same view as England, as it appears from the *London Times* that both had to apologize and make restitution in similar cases.

I remain, Yours truly,  
(Signed) JAMES BROWN.

*P. S.* I have just received a letter from Belfast, asking [our] opinion whether British property would be confiscated in case of war.

The seriousness with which the English partners contemplated the possibility of war appears in the following extracts from letters of Messrs. Brown, Shipley & Company to Messrs. Brown Brothers & Company, and of Mr. James Brown to Mr. Stewart Brown. Thus, under date of December 4, 1861, Messrs. Brown, Shipley & Company write to the New York firm as follows:

*December 4, 1861.*

Every day serves to reveal the enormous interests that would be staked upon a contest between the two countries; and whilst it leads us to hope that these may prove sufficiently weighty to deter statesmen from rashly engaging in such an alternative, it also shows us the necessity for the utmost foresight and care to prevent the most serious injury to ourselves.

In case of hostilities we hope our Government will follow the same liberal course they adopted in the Russian War, giving the enemies' ships ample time to complete voyages commenced without warning;

and if any question of the same kind should arise on your side, we trust every proper interest will be used for the adoption of a similar policy.

In the same strain Mr. James Brown writes to Mr. Stewart Brown:

LIVERPOOL, Dec. 4, 1861.

The South having confiscated the property of all persons residing in the Northern States, there are enquiries every day whether in event of war with England, British property would be safe, and even our own partners don't feel quite easy on that subject. . . .

The United States never committed a greater blunder than by confiscating the property of the rebels found in the Northern states. It has undoubtedly been the cause of a much larger amount leaving the country, and embittered the feelings of the South, rendering a reunion more and more improbable. The arrests also of Southern gentlemen going home increase the bitterness, and no Gov't can prevent the intercourse. As suggested in mine of 30th if you could get an expression from your Chambers of Commerce in the different cities regretting the necessity which seemed to exist of confiscating the property of *Rebels* which has been exercised by all Governments, but deprecating in the strongest terms the confiscation of enemies' property or interfering with the legitimate business of those residing with us which is now accorded to all the property and subjects of enemies' [countries] by all civilized nations, it would help to do away the distrust that is now felt by persons now trading with the United States and those holding any of our securities. It would be very desirable that the Merchants and Bankers of Boston and Phila, should unite, for the feeling here is strong and those having property there are very anxious. From the fact that enemies' property has always been held sacred and never interfered with in England and the Interest on her public debt held by foreigners, even those at war with her, punctually paid, she can borrow money lower than any country in the world. It is our unwise legislation that forces us to borrow money at upwards of 7 per cent which they get at less than 3 per cent. Our Secretary of the Treasury should be strongly posted upon these points and if possible [we should] get an expression from Congress when assembled.

LIVERPOOL, 5th Dec. 1861.

MR. STEWART BROWN,

*Dear Stewart:* Referring to my last I have merely to repeat that the anxiety about British property in the United States whether in merchandise or securities of any kind, does not diminish. A gentleman from Glasgow came to see the house to-day, having *no other business*. We gave him such assurances as we could, explaining the different acts of the Confederates and the retaliatory acts of the North against the property of the rebels, but as the South have confiscated the property of the North, who are not rebels to them, the question of course comes back, may not the North do the same with British property and securities, who are not rebels to them, but defending what they deem their rights under international Law. The only answer we can make to this, is that the United States did not confiscate British property in the War of 1812. You must see at a glance . . . the necessity of *immediate action* by assuring the world that aliens' property in the United States shall be held safe and as sacred as it has been and is in Great Britain or in any other country. How this is to be accomplished or brought about you must judge. . . . During the late Russian war the English merchants at St. Petersburg called on the Emperor to ascertain their position; he replied, go on with your legitimate business—articles contraband of war only excepted. A Russian house in Manchester carried on an immense business with Russia during the war, I suppose mostly through neutral ports, and made a large sum of money.

I see from a letter from Mr. Cobden to Bro. Wm. that at the next session of Parliament it is proposed to bring up the Articles of the Paris conference respecting the rights of neutrals . . . and he expresses the opinion that it must be the interest of England to agree to the American doctrine of respecting private property at sea even against armed Government Ships, and also to go a step further as suggested by the Buchanan administration to agree to put an end to blockades. This latter proposition I never heard of before, and if proposed by that administration, must have been in view of the present Blockade, not then anticipating it would occur until after that principle should be recognized.



The first impression was I think absolute astonishment at the degree of passionate vindictive indignation and invective which so generally burst forth, seeing that England had herself some hundred times inflicted on our flag, aggressions of the same character but without the extenuating circumstances attending this, the first one on our part.

The House of Commons, you know, when a new Parliament is organized, exacts from the crown a solemn promise, that it will always put the most favorable constructions on all their words and actions. It could be wished that the spirit of this good rule prevailed between nations, but especially would it have been a happy thing had the news of the *Trent* affair been received in England under such influence. Instead of this it would seem to have been determined (I won't say exactly by common consent) to make the worst of it. The incredible notion that our Government and people desired to bring on a war with England (at this particular time of all things) seems to have been seriously and extensively believed.

Then as a consequence it was assumed that Mr. Seward had laid plans to waylay the *Trent*, and that it was done under special and stringent orders; next, that the thing was done in the most brutal and offensive manner by our arrogant naval officer, glad of the chance of inflicting an indignity upon the British flag. Apparently that was taken to be the main object, the arrest of the Envoys as secondary or the mere pretext. Everybody now knows that this is just the reverse of the facts. The idea that there was any desire here for war, is too absurd to waste a word upon, and it is nearly equally so to suppose that the Government would in the midst of the great conflict on their hands risk new complications by following up the Envoys sheltered under the British flag. As to Capt. Wilkes, it seems he erred as others more learned and unlearned have erred before him, incorrectly interpreting knotty points of international law, but it must I think be clear to every candid person that the action of the Captain was that of a man who [not] only believed that the proceeding was strictly legal and proper, but moreover that it was his special and bounden duty to stop the *Trent* and arrest those men. Still, tho' he believed that the *Trent* had violated the law of nations, he studiously

confined himself to removing the Envoys in the least offensive manner possible, showing conclusively that he had no hostility to the British flag and desired not to interfere in the legitimate service of the Mail Packet.

It is I think much to be regretted that the existing generation in England have so little knowledge of the history of the political and commercial intercourse between our two countries for a series of years preceding the War of 1812. . . .

When I contrast the damage to British interests by our War and Blockade, with the almost overwhelming national prostration in this country by our embargo (and subsequent "non intercourse" and "non importation" acts) one must be struck with the insignificance of the Cotton trouble in comparison in a national view.

I can well agree with you that the capture of a thousand Rebel envoys would be dearly bought at the cost of a rupture between our countries or even any further cause of strife, and I most cordially respond to the hope you express that I should use all the influence I may to bring about a good feeling and avert the horrors of war as you, I am sure, with all good men on your side, will do your part to that end. As to the honor of England, of which you speak, I need hardly say to you that I should be among the last to attempt to contribute a stain upon it, and perhaps few even among her own people have felt more pride in her triumphs and prosperity than I have done, but I must confess that my feelings and sympathies have been most deeply tried during these last sad and bitter controversies. As to the honor of England it can have no substantial damage from abroad, but if from any combination of adverse circumstances of popular outcry, of passion, or misconception, Great Britain should in our present extremity resort to any measures calculated to bring on a War, then I feel that the honor of England would indeed be exposed to danger of a vital strain. . . .

With kind regards to Mrs. H., I am &c.,  
(Signed) JOS. SHIPLEY.

The Civil War in the United States affected most seriously the cotton trade of Liverpool with that country.

Owing to the strictness of the blockade, shipments of cotton from the United States ceased almost entirely. Communication between the Old and New Worlds by cable, successfully established in 1866, revolutionized trade between the two countries, leaving the Liverpool merchants connected with that trade without their usual occupation. In fact, the necessity for the intervention of merchants gradually ceased. Manufacturers in England, France and Germany bought their cotton by cable on samples previously sent to them from the various places of shipment, *i. e.*, New Orleans, Mobile, Charleston, Savannah, Galveston, Memphis, and other inland towns. Samples were sent to them from brokers and merchants in these cities, oftentimes accompanied by a firm offer price. These they could examine carefully in their own offices, make their selection for the style of goods they desired to manufacture, and cable either the acceptance of the offer or a counter-offer, with authority, usually arranged through some banker, to draw against shipment. As a consequence warehouse property in Liverpool, largely built for cotton storage, and which had heretofore brought a good return to the owners, was for a time empty, and its value greatly diminished. Consignments of cotton and other produce to Liverpool for sale practically ceased, and to a great extent manufactured goods for shipment to this country, which had heretofore been attended to by Liverpool merchants, were shipped direct by the manufacturers to the buyers in the United States on a through bill of lading. The old mercantile firms which were the pride of Liverpool soon disappeared. They had either to change the character of their business or close their estab-



lishments, and it is sad to note how many, unable to adapt themselves to changed conditions, failed. The port of Liverpool, however, still continued to thrive, and became the centre of the great shipping interest of the west of England, steamers gradually taking the place of sailing craft. The foresight of its public officials in providing the largest and best docks in Great Britain retained for the city a large part of the foreign and coast trade of England.

There had been frequent discussions between the partners on both sides of the Atlantic, even at an earlier date, about the advisability of establishing a house in London. The financial branch of the firm's business was assuming more and more prominence, and this could be more economically and advantageously handled in that city, while the profitable mercantile business of the Liverpool house was gradually disappearing owing to the changes alluded to above. Because of Sir<sup>1</sup> William Brown's long identification with Liverpool, however, both in his business and parliamentary career, no definite action was taken until 1863, when the subject was again revived, and with his full consent an office was opened in London in the fall of that year. The Liverpool office, however, was kept open under the management of Stewart Henry Brown until his retirement<sup>2</sup> in 1888, his son Egerton Stewart

<sup>1</sup> William Brown was created a baronet in December, 1862.

<sup>2</sup> GENTLEMEN:

"London, 31st December, 1888.

We have to inform you that our Partnership having expired this day by effluxion of time, Mr. Stewart H. Brown of Liverpool retires from our firms in England and in the United States, and that our establishment in Liverpool will be closed.

Mr. Egerton Stewart Brown, who signs for us there per procuracy, will wind up that business and continue to sign for that purpose.

We remain,

Your obedient Servants,

(Signed) BROWN, SHIPLEY & Co



**Mr. Stewart Henry Brown**



**Statue of Sir William Brown, Bart., at Liverpool**

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Brown signing for the firm by procuracy until the 30th of June, 1889, when it was finally closed. The gradual transference to London of business with the United States, and the changes in Liverpool already referred to, made its further continuance inadvisable. For the last ten years of its existence it was kept open at a considerable financial loss, partly from a feeling of sentiment for the old home of the firm, and partly out of consideration for many of the old and valued employees who could not be transferred to London. When the house was finally closed such of the clerks as were willing and able to leave Liverpool were sent to London, and the older ones pensioned.

## CHAPTER VIII

### LIVERPOOL—*Continued*

#### PUBLIC CAREER OF WILLIAM BROWN. PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF THE LIVERPOOL OFFICE.

ON March 3, 1864, the year after the opening of the London office, the long and honorable career of Sir William Brown, the founder of the Liverpool house, was closed by death. During the latter part of his life his attention had been given in an increasing degree to public interests, and the nature and extent of his services, both to the community in which he lived and to the country at large, is such as to deserve some mention here.<sup>1</sup>

William Brown's interest in the public affairs of his adopted city began soon after his settlement in Liverpool. During the mayoralty of J. B. Hollinshead in 1824 he was made an honorable freeman of the borough. In 1825 he was active in the agitation for reform in the management of the Liverpool Docks Estate, the entire government of which rested at that time with the corporation, and in connection with a deputation to the Government effected

<sup>1</sup> The information which follows has been largely taken from an account of William Brown's public career, prepared by his friend, the Rev. Abraham Hume, D.D., of Liverpool, at the time of the dedication of the free Public Library in 1860. Cf. also the *Illustrated London News* of July 12, 1851 (Parliamentary Portraits, William Brown, Esq., M.P. for South Lancashire).

an arrangement by which thirteen of the management were to be chosen from the corporation and eight from the ratepayers. He served as a representative of the ratepayers for about eight years.

He was with others instrumental in the establishment of the Bank of Liverpool in 1831, and was elected the first chairman of the board of directors. In 1835 or 1836 he was elected alderman, and acted in that capacity until October, 1838, when, declining to serve any longer, he paid the usual penalty of £50. He acted as borough magistrate for twelve years from 1833 to 1845. In 1852 he was made a deputy lieutenant of the county of Lancashire, and was chosen high sheriff for 1863.

In 1839 Mr. Brown moved the first resolution at a public meeting held to petition Parliament in favor of penny postage. In 1840 he spoke at a town meeting when a petition to Parliament for the repeal of the Corn Laws was adopted. To the end of his life he was a consistent free-trader. In June of the same year he seconded a resolution at a town meeting held to congratulate the Queen and Prince Albert on the escape of the former from assassination by Oxford, who fired at the carriage of the Queen. In 1841, at a banquet given in honor of Sir Charles Napier, Mr. Brown responded for the town and trade of Liverpool. In the July election of that year he supported Sir Joshua Walmsley and Lord Palmerston in opposition to Lord Sandon and Mr. Cresswell, speaking as an advocate of free-trade.

In 1844 he was invited by the Anti-Corn-Law League to become a candidate for Parliament from South Lancashire. Trade was depressed, the distress in the manu-

facturing towns of Lancashire extreme, but the prices of grain and live-stock were high, and the landed influence in the county so great that Mr. Brown, though he consented to come forward as an advocate of free-trade, felt the contest to be a hopeless one. Mr. Entwistle, who had formerly contested Manchester, was the candidate in the Protectionist interest. The contest engaged the utmost energy of the free-traders; and it is due to the farmers of the county to state that in the course of the canvass the friends of Mr. Brown everywhere met with their best wishes for the success of the movement. Mr. Brown was defeated; but the election was the signal for the forty-shilling freehold agitation of the League; and on the resignation of Lord Ellesmere in 1846, so completely had the condition of the registry been changed, that Mr. Brown, being again put in nomination, was returned without opposition, the chances of a contest being felt to be quite hopeless. In September, 1847, at a meeting in Manchester, he was selected to represent the free-traders of Lancashire at the Brussels Congress of all Nations. He was again elected to Parliament in 1847 and served until 1858, when he retired.

Mr. Brown first spoke in the House on Lord John Russell's motion, January 21, 1847, for the continued temporary suspension of the Corn and Navigation Laws, in consequence of the deficiency of the harvest in England and the continued failure of the Irish potato crop. He rose in reply to the late Lord George Bentinck, who had censured the government for not having prohibited the export of corn from Ireland and for having now placed the ten shillings duty in abeyance, when, had it been continued,

three million quarters of foreign corn would have been in bond, which the government might have purchased and have sold, less the duty, to the great relief of the Irish people. As germane to the proposal, his Lordship recited the story of Nardar Shah, who, when a famine raged in Persia, hanged, with his money-bags at his feet, an Armenian merchant who, having in common with others, kept his corn in store for the rise of price, was found to have the greatest quantity. In answer to this, Mr. Brown referred to the fact that a famine happened at Antioch in the reign of Julian. The Emperor, adopting the policy recommended by the noble Lord, fixed a price for corn which, being lower than that of the surrounding country, caused the merchants to pass by Antioch as an unprofitable market; and so, by the good intentions of the Emperor, the people were more starved than ever. There was also another Eastern case in point. Some years since a famine occurred at Guzerat. There was a rice store in Bombay. The Council, after anxious deliberation, resolved not to prevent its free export to the places of scarcity. The result was that not a day passed without grain-laden ships dropping their anchors at Bombay, so that the supply was well maintained. As to the dealers in grain, on whom such severe reflections had been cast, they simply bought at one time to sell again when the scarcity was more severe. They took nothing from the whole supply of corn, but used their capital for its more equitable distribution over the period of want, and he therefore considered them a most useful class of dealers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The foregoing account of Mr. Brown's speech, is taken, in substance, from "Parliamentary Lives."



Mr. Brown took a leading part in Parliament in the advocacy of decimal coinage, and in 1854 obtained a parliamentary committee of urgency on the merits of the system, but was never able to secure the adoption of this favorite measure. From the first, as was natural, he was interested in American affairs. In 1850 he carried on through the columns of the *Pennsylvanian*, an American newspaper, a correspondence with Mr. Meredith, Secretary of the Treasury of the United States and a Protectionist, and the American Minister, Mr. Lawrence, in defence of free-trade. These letters attracted a considerable amount of attention and comment in the public journals on both sides of the Atlantic.

Nor was his influence confined to the realm of political economy and finance. His mercantile position, acquainting him as it did with the conditions both in England and America, gave him an influence more potent than many accredited diplomats, and on more than one occasion this great influence was exerted in the cause of peace. At one time a boundary dispute between the two countries had aroused the pugnacity of Lord Palmerston, and a crisis was imminent. Mr. Brown was in possession of facts and figures bearing on the intimacy of the relations between England and the United States, which were accessible to no one else. Feeling the responsibility of his position he brought this information to the attention of those in office. He showed what must be the inevitable consequences of war, how the stoppage of supplies of American cotton might result in a revolution in Lancashire, and so impressed those to whom the representations were made that an amicable adjustment of the question at issue was ultimately brought about.



**Sir William Brown and His Sons William and James Clifton**

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Again, in 1856, the critical position into which diplomatic relations had been brought made it important to obtain some decisive expression of public sentiment. Mr. Brown accordingly entered into communication with Mr. Robertson Gladstone, and, as a result, the Financial Reform Association and the towns of Liverpool and Manchester adopted addresses to the commercial and industrial classes in the United States. These addresses were published by the American papers and were well received, considered and fitly responded to. The threatening war cloud disappeared and both nations again breathed freely.

During the time of the Civil War in the United States, though not then in Parliament, Mr. Brown was in constant communication with members of the British Cabinet and was often consulted by them as to the real conditions in the United States. He was very anxious that the American Government should take some steps to counteract the influence of representatives of the Confederate government in social circles in London. They were men of good social position with a wide acquaintance in London society, and by presenting the cause of the South in a plausible and tactful way exerted a powerful influence on public opinion there. In a letter to Secretary Seward<sup>1</sup> Mr. Brown urged that some properly accredited persons of good social standing should be sent to London to present the cause of the North with the same skill and tact that the representatives of the Confederacy used. This country owes much to the influence which he exercised upon public men in Great Britain at that critical time.

<sup>1</sup> Many years after, the writer, on a visit to Secretary Seward's son, saw this letter carefully filed away among Mr. Seward's private correspondence.

A correspondence between Sir William Brown and Mr. W. H. Russell, familiarly known as "Bull Run" Russell, the representative of the London *Times* in this country during the time of the war, affords an example of the reckless stories then published in respectable English papers:

LIVERPOOL, Jan. 5, 1863.

SIR: My attention has been called to the assertions made respecting myself and my brother in pages 4 and 5 of your Diary "kept while in the United States" as correspondent of the *Times*, and which are so utterly unfounded, that I am sure you will feel it due to yourself to publicly withdraw them.

After remarking on the subject of my nephew's visit to England, and on the birthplace of myself and my brother, both of which I may now mention are incorrectly stated, you proceed to say that "in the War of 1812 the brothers were about sailing in a privateer fitted out to prey against the British, when accident fixed one of them in Liverpool." Only one inference can be drawn from this paragraph, viz. that my brother and myself were on the point of engaging in privateering, which is so utterly untrue, that I must request from you a public contradiction to a charge so inconsistent with the whole course of our well known principles; for, though legalized, we have ever considered it a degrading and demoralizing pursuit, and there is not a member of my family who ever did or ever would embark in it directly or indirectly, in any shape or form.

The real facts are these. I went to America for the first time in 1800, leaving my brothers at school in England. They soon after followed me to the United States, where they remained in business with my father. In 1810 I commenced business in Liverpool, and after my marriage I proceeded to the United States, with Mrs. Brown, on a visit to my family. During the time I was there the war broke out, and we immediately returned home in the *Pacific*, the first cartel after the commencement of the war. It is my intention to wait a few days before sending a copy of this letter to the *Times*. This will afford you sufficient time to reply.

I have the honor etc.,

(Signed) WILLIAM BROWN.

January 13, 1863.

SIR:

On my return to town I found your letter of January 5, which had been forwarded to me from the *Times* Office, in which you take exception to a passage quoted from my *Diary North and South*, pp. 4-5, and inform me that the statements made there are incorrect. It gives me concern to hear that I have misrepresented facts, and as there will be a new edition of my book issued shortly, I will cause your contradiction to be inserted, and the passage complained of to be omitted. The greater part of the statement came from your nephew. The part which relates to the sailing of the privateer was told me by a gentleman on board, who said he knew your family and who further informed me that your father was implicated at the rebellion of '98 and migrated in consequence to the United States. I need not assure anyone who knows me how sincerely I regret being made the means of spreading an erroneous story, but to you, Sir, I may add that any reparation in my power to make shall be cheerfully given as you may prescribe.

I have the honor to be

(Signed) W. H. RUSSELL.

In 1856 Mr. Brown offered to contribute a considerable sum for the erection of a building for the home of the Free Public Library and the Lord Derby Museum, if the town of Liverpool would purchase a site. He became so deeply interested in the project that he finally assumed the entire cost of the erection of the building, which involved an expenditure of about £100,000. In 1860 the completed building was presented to the town of Liverpool with appropriate ceremonies which lasted several days.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> They began with a meeting of working-men in the Amphitheatre on the evening of the 17th of October, presided over by Mr. Anderson, the Mayor of Liverpool. Addresses were made by Mr. T. B. Horsfall, M.P., Mr. William Rathbone, Mr. Daniel Guile, a working-man, Lord Brougham, and others. On this occasion an

The constantly increasing numbers of working-people making use of the library and museum, and Mr. Brown's friendly talks with them on his frequent visits there, added greatly to the happiness of his declining years.

Mr. Brown took a lively interest in the volunteer movement from its beginning. With the help of his grandsons he organized the first brigade of Lancashire Volunteer

address was presented on behalf of the working-men of Liverpool to Mr. Brown by Thomas Kaye.

On the following day the building was formally opened and presented by Mr. Brown to the Mayor. The exercises began by the presentation of addresses to Mr. Brown from different public bodies who, with invited guests, met at the Town Hall. After appropriate replies by Mr. Brown the procession started from the Town Hall in this order: Boys from the school frigate *Conway*, seamen from Her Majesty's ship *Majestic*, and various companies of volunteers from Liverpool and the adjacent neighborhood; boys in uniform from the different public and private institutions, the magistrates, town councillors, aldermen, regalia and officers of the corporation. Then followed in an open carriage and four the Mayor and the Recorder, William Brown and his brother James, the Mayor's state carriage, the Mayor's chariot, and other carriages with invited guests, and the members of the staff of Brown, Shipley & Company and citizens brought up the rear.

After the principal guests and leading citizens who had walked in the procession had taken position on the dais in front of the library, Mr. Brown made a presentation speech concluding as follows: "I have been looking forward for some time to the present occasion, when everything connected with this establishment would be placed under the parental care of the corporation. That day has arrived, and I have now the satisfaction of proclaiming that the library and museum are open to my fellow-townsmen and others, be their religion or their politics what they may. This is neutral ground. To see this building consecrated to the public good is most gratifying to me and consummates my utmost wishes and desires. To you, Mr. Mayor, I now deliver it over, for the perpetual benefit of the public, and especially my fellow-townsmen, earnestly wishing that prosperity, happiness and every other blessing may attend you one and all."

In behalf of the town the Mayor replied accepting the gift, and a few short addresses were made by Lord Brougham, the Bishop of Chester, James Brown, the Rev. Dr. Raffles, J. A. Picton, and others. In the evening there was a large public banquet in St. George's Hall, at which again speeches were made by Lord Stanley, as the representative of the Earl of Derby, who was unavoidably absent, Sir Thomas Basley, M.P., William Ewart, M.P., Sir John Bowring and many others, and a statue of Mr. Brown, placed in St. George's Hall by the town council of



Library at Liverpool, given by Sir William Brown, Bart.



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Artillery, served as its lieutenant-colonel, and until within a few months of his death appeared mounted at the head of his regiment on all public occasions.

In recognition of his gift to Liverpool and for other services rendered by him to the public, Mr. Brown was made a baronet by the Queen <sup>1</sup> on the 13th of December,

Liverpool in recognition of his gift, was unveiled. The exercises were concluded on the following evening by a ball given by the Mayor and Mrs. Anderson in the Town Hall in honor of the occasion.

<sup>1</sup> In the recent collection of Queen Victoria's letters (1837-1861), edited by A. C. Benson, M.A., and Viscount Esher, G.C.V.O., K.C.B., appears the following letter of Lord Palmerston, which foreshadows this action:

PICCADILLY, 30th Dec. 1861.

Viscount Palmerston presents his humble duty to your Majesty and has read with deep emotion your Majesty's letter of the 26th, every word of which went straight to his heart. Viscount Palmerston would, however, humbly express a hope that the intensity of your Majesty's grief may not lead your Majesty to neglect your health, the preservation of which is so important for the welfare of your Majesty's children, and for that of your Majesty's devotedly attached and affectionate subjects, and which is so essentially necessary to enable your Majesty to perform those duties which it will be the object of your Majesty's life to fulfil.

Lord Granville has communicated to Viscount Palmerston your Majesty's wish that Mr. Dilke should be made a Baronet, and that Mr. Bowring should be made a Companion of the Bath, and both of these things will be done accordingly. But there are three other persons whose names Viscount Palmerston has for some time wished to submit to your Majesty for the dignity of Baronet, and if your Majesty should be graciously pleased to approve of them, the list would stand as follows.

Mr. Dilke.

Mr. William Brown, of Liverpool, a very wealthy and distinguished merchant who lately made a magnificent present of a public library to his fellow citizens.

Mr. Thomas Davies Lloyd, a rich and highly respectable gentleman of the County of Carnarvon.

Mr. Rich, to whom the government is under great obligation, for having of his own accord and without any condition vacated last year his seat for Richmond in Yorkshire to obtain the valuable services of Mr. Roundell Palmer as your Majesty's Solicitor-General.

Viscount Palmerston has put into this box some private letters which Lord Russell thinks your Majesty might perhaps like to look at.

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1862. Lord Palmerston informed Mr. Brown of this action in the following letter:

MY DEAR SIR:

94 PICCADILLY, 13 Dec. 1862.

I am authorized by the Queen to ask you whether it would be agreeable to you to be raised to the dignity of Baronet in consideration of your eminent commercial position and of your generous conduct towards the public of Liverpool with respect to the munificent gift which you have made to them. If you accept this offer have the goodness to let me know your correct designation in regard to name and residence.

My dear Sir

Yours faithfully

(Signed) PALMERSTON.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, William Brown made only one visit to the United States after his return to Liverpool in 1812. He seems to have visited this country in 1838 with his son Alexander, who, while here, married, on the 19th of December, 1838, his cousin, the eldest daughter of James Brown. They returned to Liverpool together in the packet-ship *Siddons* in May, 1839.

William Brown died on March 3, 1864, at Richmond Hill, after a brief illness. None of his eight children survived him. Two only lived to grow up, Alexander, whose widow with her children was living with Sir William at the time of his death, and a daughter who married John Hargreaves, Esq., of Broad Oak, Accrington.

Before continuing the account of the firm during the more recent period of its history it will be well to pause for a moment and to note by way of contrast the methods

of conducting business in Liverpool just before and during the early days of the Civil War, with which during his residence there the writer had an excellent opportunity to become familiar.

After graduating from Columbia College in 1859, I sailed for Liverpool on August 30 of that year, in the ship *Escort*, one of the last of the old packet-ships sailing regularly between New York and Liverpool. The passage occupied twenty-one days, and when the pilot was taken aboard off Liverpool Harbor, he received the usual *douceur*—some hunks of salt pork from the galley, and, doubtless, something in a more liquid form, which he took back to his mates on the pilot-boat. After spending the winter on the Nile with some relatives and friends, I returned to England, June 30, 1860, very much prostrated by a severe illness contracted in Syria.

Before leaving home I was quite uncertain whether I should adopt a professional or business career, and while travelling in the East the subject was a matter of frequent correspondence between my father and myself. As he wished me to make up my own mind, he placed before me with perfect fairness the advantages and disadvantages of the different careers. Up to this time I had led the life of a student and had no special fondness for business. If anything, my inclination was for a profession. As, however, the health of my elder brother was precarious, I decided to enter the office to be of as much help as possible to my father. In the autumn of 1860 my father and mother reached Liverpool on their way to the Continent, and as the question of my career had now been definitely settled my father strongly advised me to enter the Liver-

pool office. He said: "If you want to prepare yourself for a business career this is the place to begin. You can get a better training here than at home, as you must begin at the bottom and take your chances with every one else." I accordingly entered the Liverpool office in the autumn of 1860.

The only exception made in my favor was that instead of being apprenticed for a definite number of years, as most other young men were, I was permitted, by working longer hours, to get my training in a shorter time. Indeed, at that time the hours at the Liverpool office were very irregular and very long. According to the custom of the town, bills could be left for acceptance at merchants' offices as late as nine o'clock in the evening, and when the American mails arrived, as they often did, late in the afternoon, partners and clerks were kept at the office till a very late hour. To secure prompt acceptance and save interest, letters were written and mailed, enclosing the bills for acceptance on out of town firms, and bills on Liverpool were delivered by hand, each banker and merchant being obliged to provide either some one in his office to receive the bills as late as nine o'clock, or, more usually, a box on his office door into which bills could be dropped. This custom was handed down from the old stage-coach days, when the London mail arrived late in the afternoon, and it continued during my residence in Liverpool.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Since 1867 the practice has been gradually modified. At first banks and exchange houses agreed that bills might be left for acceptance up to six P. M. This practice continued for a long time, but modifications crept in, and ultimately most of the banks declined to accept bills after five P. M. The mercantile community soon followed suit. Subsequently one or two banks began declining to accept bills left after banking hours, viz.: three P. M. on ordinary days and half-past

At the time I entered the office, Liverpool was at the height of its commercial prosperity, and was the principal cotton market not only for England but for the Continent; although Havre, and to a less extent Hamburg and Bremen, were beginning to assume importance as centres of this trade for their respective countries. Liverpool early secured this advantage over other ports by the wise forethought of its merchants and public officials in building the magnificent stone docks and brick warehouses which then lined the Mersey,—docks which have been greatly enlarged in recent times to provide for the increased size of modern steamers. The merchants of Liverpool were men of large means, great intelligence and foresight, and by liberal advances to shippers in other countries were able to secure large consignments of cotton mainly from the United States, and large amounts of produce from other parts of the world. The only British ports competing successfully with Liverpool at that time were Glasgow and London, the latter mainly for the East India trade. The bulk of the import and export trade to and from the United States passed through Liverpool and paid tribute to its merchants.

In our Liverpool office a very large clerical force was twelve on Saturday. In order to establish uniformity of practice, the managers of the Liverpool banks met on June, 22, 1906, and agreed that four o'clock on ordinary days and one o'clock on Saturday should be the recognized hours up to which bills might be left for acceptance. This decision, of course, only affected the banks, but gradually the hours agreed upon by the banks are being adopted by the mercantile community generally.

In London the practice was different. Until about 1850 the bank hours were from nine to five, and after that the hour for closing was four P. M., except on Saturdays, when from March, 1860, the private banks and joint-stock banks closed at three P. M., and later the closing hour on Saturday was changed to two P. M., and still later to one.

needed to look after cotton and other produce consigned to Brown, Shipley & Company for sale, and to expedite the shipment of manufactured goods from Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield and other adjacent towns, consigned to us for export to the United States. Mr. Hamilton had charge of the sale of cotton and other produce, while Mr. Collet looked more especially after the credits and financial business, and Mr. Stewart Henry Brown attended to the general correspondence and clerical force. From his long experience in Savannah and in Liverpool, Mr. Hamilton had become an expert judge of cotton, and it was common report that more disputes between buyer and seller about the quality of cotton had been referred to Mr. Hamilton for settlement than to any other man in Liverpool. His decision was rarely questioned. Cotton was usually bought and sold on the open square behind the Town Hall, on one side of which was the Cotton Exchange. This square was flagged and surrounded by a colonnade, under which in rainy weather merchants and brokers transacted their business. During the whole time of my residence in Liverpool, and for some time thereafter, payments for produce bought or sold were in gold, Bank of England notes, or short sight drafts on London. With the exception of a few personal accounts of partners, the only checks drawn in the Liverpool office were on the Bank of England, usually one in the morning, to supply the cashier with the notes and gold needed for the day's work. At the end of the day all notes and gold were deposited in the Bank of England, with the exception of a small amount which might be needed after bank hours. On a busy day, when transactions on the

Cotton Exchange were large, I have seen a long row of boys from brokers' offices, with bags of gold on their shoulders and Bank of England notes in their pocket-books, waiting to make their settlements with our cashier.

At such times it was necessary to add to the cashier's regular force a number of clerks to weigh or count the gold, to enter the Bank of England notes by number and to check the interest calculations on short sight drafts. This stupid and uneconomical method of conducting business was due to the practice of the Banks in Liverpool of charging a commission of one-quarter per cent. upon all accounts subject to check,—a practice long maintained after it had been modified or abandoned in London.<sup>1</sup>

Although the docks in Liverpool were exceptionally well built and well ordered, there were then no mechanical devices for unloading ships, nor, as far as I can recollect, for shutting the dock gates. Vessels were unloaded with a hand winch, requiring a large gang of men to handle heavy goods, and on the introduction of the first steam winch, some time after I had been in the office, the business of the port was paralyzed for a time by a strike of the dock laborers who objected to this innovation.

The first grain elevator for handling and storing grain by mechanical means, copied from those in the United States, was built in 1868. I remember on a subsequent visit being

<sup>1</sup> It has not yet been wholly abandoned in Liverpool, although greatly modified. On accounts subject to check the practice is now:

1. To charge no commission and allow no interest, but to require the maintenance of a credit balance of a definite amount, a practice now prevailing in London but not very frequent in Liverpool.

2. To charge a specified annual amount, interest being allowed on credit balances.

3. To charge a small commission on the turn-over.



taken to see it, as a great novelty, by Mr. Hamilton. When I was there, grain received by vessel in bulk was first bagged, then loaded on small four-wheeled open railway vans holding about five tons, covered with a tarpaulin, and shipped to the small flour-mills throughout the country.

As an illustration of the limited volume of trade with the United States in those days, I remember distinctly a discussion in our office, between Mr. Hamilton and some other prominent merchants of Liverpool, about the folly of building such a large vessel as the *Great Eastern*, which was then lying without occupation in the Bristol Channel. It was agreed that no merchants would think of shipping goods in such a big steamer, as she would have to wait so long in Liverpool before she could get a full cargo that shippers by the regular and smaller vessels would receive their goods in New York days before those loaded on the *Great Eastern*. This was discussed in all soberness by the men present.

I recall another interesting discussion between several prominent Liverpool merchants. Soon after the outbreak of the Civil War, when the Lancashire mills were suffering because of the cessation of their usual supplies of cotton from the Southern States, it was felt that England must look elsewhere, especially to Egypt and to India, for an adequate supply and that immediate steps should be taken to increase shipments from these sources. The opinion was expressed and heartily concurred in by Mr. Hamilton that we should never see another four-million-bale crop of American cotton, because it was impossible to raise cotton in the Southern States, except on large plantations and by

negro labor. One of the gentlemen present, the youngest, a partner of a prominent firm in Liverpool, took exception to this view and asked which was the most valuable agricultural crop raised in the United States. Cotton, of course, was the reply. "You are mistaken, gentlemen," he said, "the last published census of the United States Government states that the hay crop exceeds in value any other single agricultural crop in the country," and then he added, "This crop is all raised on small farms. Cotton requires no more care or skill in its cultivation and harvesting than hay. I know cotton can be raised by white labor because I have recently returned from Texas, where large amounts are now so raised." He then went on to predict that, should the war result in the abolition of slavery, large plantations would be broken up and small farm cultivation introduced, and we should have a larger crop of American cotton than ever before.

As a further illustration of the changes in office records rendered necessary by modern business, I must mention that all transactions in our Liverpool office were entered originally in a day-book or blotter, then posted into a journal, and then again posted into the ledgers. This added largely to the work and to the liability to error. Among the ledgers was a series known as "*Account Current Ledgers*," into which all transactions were posted in full as they occurred from day to day, and a transcript of these ledger records formed the merchants' account current, rendered every six months. In one of the years of my residence there it was almost the middle of February before our ledgers could be balanced. Every entry for the past six months had to be called over six times before

the errors could be corrected and a true balance obtained. This delay caused great vexation and annoyance to our clients, especially to those in the Southern States who were clamoring for permission to draw against their balances. At this time modern methods of book-keeping were used in London, but it was impossible to get our old book-keeper in Liverpool to adopt them. This occurrence, however, proved his Waterloo, and it was pathetic to notice the chagrin of the old man when one of his pupils, who had been transferred to the London office, returned a few years after to introduce modern methods in the Liverpool books.

In spite of what would now be considered antiquated methods, a Liverpool merchant's office offered an exceptionally thorough training, not only in the principles which govern mercantile transactions generally, but in the nice details of office work and accounting; and I owe a great deal to the discipline gained during my years there,—some of which was far from pleasant at the time.

I remember soon after I entered the office being required by the head of the department in which I happened to be to answer an ordinary routine letter, of which there were hundreds every day, and which were written rapidly and without trouble by the mere lad who was by my side. Although a fairly good Latin and Greek scholar, I had had no experience in business correspondence, and many of the expressions used conveyed no definite idea to my mind. I made several attempts at an answer, which, however, did not satisfy me, and was conscious that my associates were highly amused, but they made no effort to help me out of the difficulty. At last the letter was

finished, after a fashion, and I was told to take it into the private office for signature. When I presented it to Mr. Collet, he turned to me with a peculiar smile, and said rather doubtfully, "That's a *letter*," to which I replied, "I know it is not right, but I cannot tell where the trouble is." I shall never forget the kindly interest he took to set me right. He criticised the letter as having neither beginning, middle nor end. He then said, "Every leading firm in Liverpool has its own form for a routine office letter, in order that the person opening it may at a glance judge of its importance and, without the necessity of reading it carefully, pass it over to its proper department." He then showed me a number of letters from leading firms in Liverpool, and one also from one of the government offices. After the acknowledgment of the letter under reply, its substance followed, and then the answer in as few words as possible. The result was that, when a letter was brought to an official for signature, he did not have to consult the original, but could generally tell from the abstract before him whether the reply was correct or not. In modified form this practice was followed in the best offices in Liverpool.

I am reminded, as I close this brief account of the methods and practice of the Liverpool office, of an amusing incident that occurred soon after I entered, and which brings out forcibly the different relations existing at that time between partners and clerks in an English and an American office. One day Mr. Hamilton passed behind my desk on his way to the basement to examine some cotton samples before going on 'Change. As he approached the stairs he met one of the clerks who had

recently joined the volunteer force and was in true military fashion trying to raise a mustache. Mr. Hamilton looked at the young man for a moment, and then to the amusement of all present exclaimed, "Mr. ——, what is this? I want you to understand I won't have any one in the office with a dirty upper lip. Take that off." Fearful of losing his place, and still more afraid of the sport his fellow-officers would make of him if he complied with the order, he asked Mr. William Brown, through his secretary, a captain in the regiment of which Mr. Brown was lieutenant-colonel, to intercede with Mr. Hamilton on his behalf. I was present in the private office when Mr. Brown came in and with a broad smile asked Mr. Hamilton to modify his order, as Her Majesty's service must take precedence over an office regulation, and a mustache was becoming an institution among Her Majesty's officers.

## CHAPTER IX

### LONDON

1863-1906. BROWN, SHIPLEY & COMPANY.

AS already mentioned, the London office was opened in the fall of 1863, and Mr. Collet, who from his previous training was especially fitted for that work, moved to London, and secured premises in Founders' Court, Lothbury, opposite the Bank of England.

A chronicler and antiquary, by name John Stow, in a survey of London written in the year 1598, gives the following quaint derivation of the names Lothbury and Founders' Court. A "berie" or court was of old time kept in the street now called "Lothberie," but "by whom is grown out of memory." In the street lived founders,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Founders' Company is of very ancient origin, antedating the year 1365. In 1376 we have proof of its importance, as two of its members were invited to serve in the Common Council for that year. In 1584, when considerable alarm had arisen because of the loss of the legal standards, the Founders' Company was made responsible for the standard weights and measures, and no persons were able to buy or sell except with weights and measures which bore the stamp of the Founders' Company. In 1614 it was reorganized with the same responsibilities under a charter granted by King James.

Founders' Hall was built in 1530 on or near the site of the present office of Brown, Shipley & Company. It was rebuilt after the great fire in London. It was frequently let to dissenting congregations for their services, and at one time was used by the congregation of the First Scotch Church in London. In 1846 it became practically the first telegraph office in London.

Further information concerning the history of the Founders' Company and their hall is given in the interesting account furnished me by my partner, Edward Clifton Brown, which appears as Appendix I.

“that cast candlesticks, chafing-dishes, spice mortars and such like copper or laton works,” and turned them with the foot to make them smooth and bright “with turning and scrating.” This made “a loathsome noise to the passers-by that have not been used to the like,” and the spot was therefore by them “disdainfully called Lothberie.”

Upon the opening of the London office on December 13, 1863, Mr. Collet issued the following circular:

GENTLEMEN: LIVERPOOL, 15th December 1863.

We beg to inform you that we have opened a house in London under the same firm as that in Liverpool. The business will be conducted at both places in connection, as hitherto, with our establishments in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore.

The address in London will be

Founders' Court,  
Lothbury, London, E. C.

We are, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servants,  
BROWN, SHIPLEY & COMPANY.

Mr. Collet was joined by Mr. Hoskier early in 1864,<sup>1</sup> and about the same time by his brother-in-law, Frederick Chalmers, who entered the firm as a clerk. In March, 1866, the latter was sent to Liverpool to assist Stewart Henry Brown, and while there received power to sign for the firm. Mr. Hamilton was then transferred to London.

At the suggestion of James Brown, Mr. Hoskier was

<sup>1</sup> Owing, however, to Mr. Hamilton's illness, he was obliged to return to Liverpool for part of the winter of 1864.



**Mr. Frederick Chalmers**



**Mr. Herman Hoskier**





made a partner in 1866, and continued with the firm in London until 1880, when he retired owing to ill-health.

In the early part of 1866, during a short visit by Mr. Hoskier to Algiers, Overend, Gurney & Company failed, and the big panic of that year began. In a private letter he writes: "Les affaires sont mauvaises"; and in May: "Nous perdons naturellement beaucoup d'argent, mais heureusement les reins sont solides pour ce que regarde notre position à moins que le *monde* craque de A à Z"; and again: "Depuis le commencement de la crise nous n'avons pas escomté un sou, et, à l'exception de Rothschild et Baring peut être, je crois que personne ne peu dire autant."

Frederick Chalmers became a partner January 1, 1869, and remained in Liverpool until 1872, when, owing to the increased pressure in London, he was transferred at the end of the year, leaving Stewart Henry Brown sole partner in Liverpool. The latter was, however, assisted by James Haldane Heriot, who had received full power of attorney to sign in London on the first of January, 1868, and who was transferred to Liverpool on the first of January, 1873.

After the establishment of the London office, an account was opened as a matter of course with the Bank of England, with which the firm had always had an account in its Liverpool Branch; but the main account remained with the Consolidated Bank, in the management of which the old partners of Heywood, Kennards & Company took an active part, to the entire satisfaction of the firm. The account was continued there until the 28th of May, 1866, when the Consolidated Bank came to a temporary stop. Mr. Collet writes, "For some days we worked our account more through the Bank of England, and it was a question

whether our main account should remain there or go to the Westminster; but for reasons too long to explain here, it was judged best to go to the London and Westminster.”<sup>1</sup>

Of his own connection with the Bank of England, Mr. Collet writes as follows:

I was elected a Director . . . in 1866, just before the great crisis of that year when Overend, Gurney & Company failed, and I am still<sup>2</sup> on the Court, having filled the office of Deputy Governor and Governor for the usual term of two years each.<sup>3</sup> The latter period embraced the conversion of the National Debt by Mr. Goschen, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, entailing upon the Governor, as well as the permanent staff, a very severe strain. I was for weeks in constant communication with Mr. Goschen preparatory to his making his speech, and indeed in formulating the whole plan. The labor it involved put such a strain both on myself and two or three of the higher permanent staff that our health gave way, and that was the beginning of my breakdown. . . . I accompanied Mr. Goschen to the House where I had a seat in the Speakers' Gallery, and had some difficulty, before he took his seat, to keep him up to one point on which he feared to be attacked, but which, if he had yielded upon, would, I feel sure, have impaired, if not wrecked, his scheme. I joined him in his private room in the House after the debate, when he thanked me warmly for the services the Bank had rendered the Government; and some time after (wholly unsought and unexpected by me) I was offered through him a baronetcy in recognition of those services.

In looking back upon the time covered by the personal recollections you have asked for, I remember with gratitude that having taken a more or less active part in all the great commercial panics of the last sixty odd years (1837, 1848, 1857-58, 1866, and 1890-91), and in the business that led up to them, I have been preserved from any

<sup>1</sup> There it still remains.

<sup>2</sup> April 10, 1900.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Collet was Deputy Governor from 1885 to 1887, and Governor from 1887 to 1889.

more serious consequences to myself than the anxiety involved and perhaps some money loss; but the remembrance of 1857, 1866 and 1890 remains too vivid ever to pass from my memory.

It was at first a great trial to Mr. Hamilton to leave Liverpool. He was much less cosmopolitan in his tastes and habits than Mr. Collet, was a splendid horseman, and enjoyed his days of hunting with the Cheshire hounds. He knew and was well known by every one in Liverpool, and was among the foremost merchants of that city. The business in Liverpool, notably that on the Cotton Exchange, was transacted between principals, and he therefore came into personal contact with those with whom he was dealing. The methods of business in London were different; almost all transactions, financial and commercial, being arranged through brokers. Principals rarely met. Mr. Hamilton had comparatively few acquaintances in London, and was at first almost an unknown man there; but his sterling qualities and marked ability soon made for him a place in the great metropolis. To the last days of his life, however, he looked back to his residence and business life in Liverpool as the best and happiest years of his career.

In 1871 Sir John Lubbock introduced a bill in the House of Commons modifying the law with reference to Bank Holidays, confining the operation of the law to banks and bank clerks alone. In reference to this measure Mr. Hamilton wrote, "Seeing the inconvenience likely to arise, I communicated my view to Sir John, through, I think, F. Edlmann, and received the answer that it was only intended for Banks. The Bill passed the third reading in this form. Seeing that Lord Salisbury had charge of the

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Bill in the Lords, I wrote to his Lordship, pointing out the annoyance which would arise if some provision was not made to protect merchants, &c. I received a courteous reply, saying he was obliged to me, and [had] inserted words in the Bill to the effect that no liability occurred beyond that now existing on Christmas Day and Good Friday. This covered the whole matter." Mr. Hamilton's letter and Lord Salisbury's reply follow:

FOUNDERS' COURT, LONDON, *May 5th*, 1871.

MY LORD MARQUIS:

Having noticed that your Lordship has taken charge of the Bank Holiday Bill, I have to ask you to excuse the liberty I now take in pointing out a few of the serious inconveniences and complications likely to arise in Mercantile Transactions, if the Bill passes in its present form.

The Bill provides for a "Holiday for Bankers," and for the Regulation of the payment of Bills of Exchange, Promissory Notes, etc., falling due on such Holiday, but it makes no provision for a Holiday for Merchants, or acceptance of Bills.

Your Lordship is doubtless aware that there are many Houses, such as Messrs. Rothschilds, Baring Brothers & Co., and my own Firm, Brown, Shipley & Co., who are not legally Bankers, but Merchants, tho' their Transactions in Bills of Exchange, Home and Foreign Monetary operations are on a much larger scale than many Bankers.

By the law, as it now exists, and will exist under the New Bill in its present Form, these Houses will not dare to close their Offices. They must present Bills for acceptance, attend to Orders for Insurance, and make payments due otherwise than in Bills of Exchange and Promissory Notes. They will also be bound to protect all Bills *not* on Bankers, which may be unaccepted, in consequence of Offices being closed.

I may also point out to your Lordship that the Telegram is used to an immense extent in ordering payments of large Sums on account



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of Parties in Foreign Countries, it being no uncommon thing to receive a Telegram ordering the payment on receipt of £10,000, £50,000 or even £100,000 in one line. How is this to be met?

A Merchant cannot retain in his Office Sums like these, to meet unexpected demands, and yet he is bound to carry out the contract made by his Representative abroad, who cannot be aware that his Banker is taking a Holiday.

By making the Holiday a *Legal one generally*, and especially for Bankers, these embarrassments will be greatly relieved, if not entirely removed. At any rate no legal responsibility can be entailed on Merchants, if the Law includes all classes and not Bankers only.

The inconvenience of a want of uniformity in paying Bills under the old and New Holiday Acts is so apparent, as scarcely to call for comment, were it not for the way in which the House of Commons has ignored it. I, therefore, merely give an illustration of the practical working of this Clause of the present Bill.

Should December 26th happen to fall on Sunday, then Xmas Day being on Saturday, Bills due on the 26th must be paid on the previous Friday, under the existing Law. If the 26th December falls on a Monday, then by the New Law, Bills due on this day will not be payable till Tuesday. This will be rather a difficult calculation for Foreigners, who have to provide for their engagements in this country.

I beg to apologize for trespassing on your time, and can only offer as an excuse the importance of the case, and shortness of time before the Bill may become Law.

I have the honour to be

My Lord Marquis,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) FRANCIS ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY.

To this letter his Lordship replied as follows:

HATFIELD HOUSE, HERTS.

Lord Salisbury presents his compliments to Mr. Hamilton, and begs to acknowledge with many thanks the receipt of his letter in



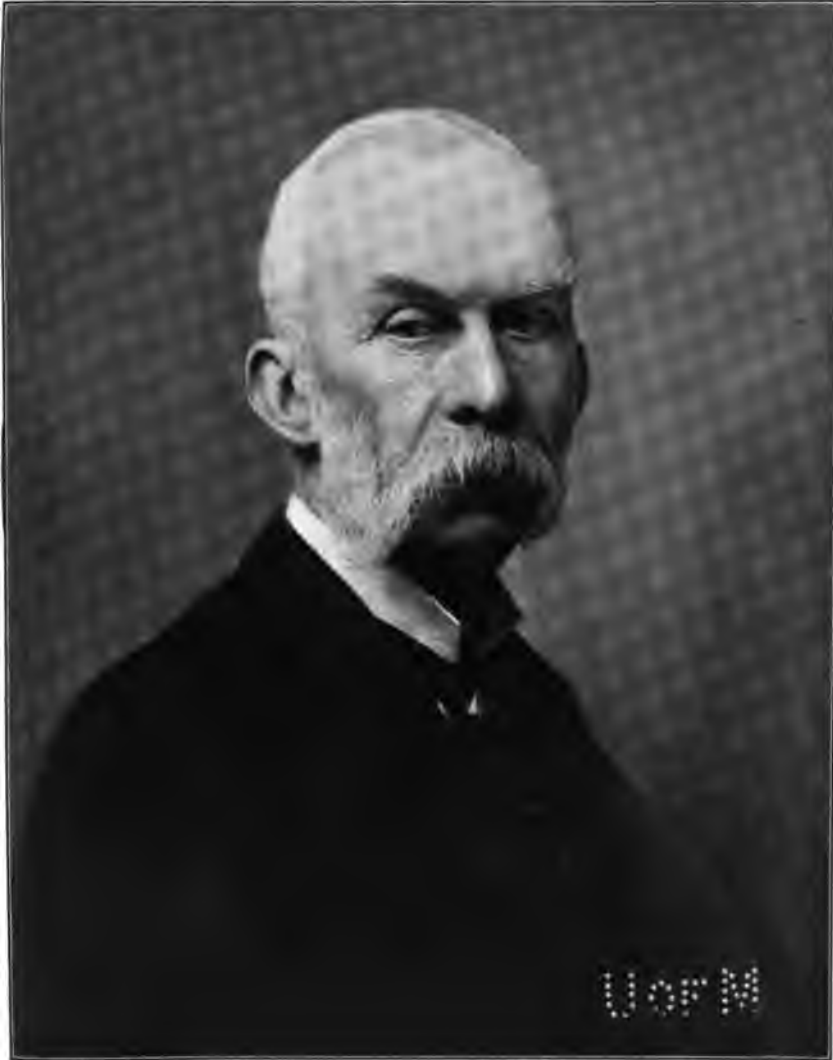
reference to the Bank Holiday Bill, and to say it shall receive his careful attention.

He understands it is the intention of the Duke of Richmond to move to alter that portion of the Bill which makes bills payable on the day subsequent, instead of preceding, the day declared to be a Holiday.

*May 6th, 1871.*

The increased communication between the New World and the Old, the numbers of Americans yearly visiting London both for business and pleasure, passing not as heretofore through Liverpool alone, but through the channel ports, both English and French, and the additional work thrown upon Mr. Collet from his connection with the Bank of England, made another resident partner in London necessary to relieve the pressure upon him and Mr. Hamilton. To fill this position, and especially to look after the interests of the firm's American clientèle, Howard Potter, son-in-law of James Brown, was transferred from New York in 1883, and continued to live in London until his death, on March 24, 1897, returning, however, for yearly visits to the United States to keep himself in touch with matters in this country.

On the 3d of April, 1885, Brown, Shipley & Company were appointed fiscal agents of the United States by President Cleveland, and both the State and Navy Department accounts were transferred to them from Messrs. Morton, Rose & Company on the 24th of April of that year. The Navy Department account was closed on June 3, 1889, and transferred to Messrs. Seligman Brothers, and the State Department account was closed on the 19th of August, 1889, and transferred back to Messrs. Morton, Rose & Company.



**Sir Alexander Hargreaves Brown, Bart.**

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After Mr. Cleveland's reëlection Messrs. Brown, Shipley & Company were, on the 10th of April, 1893, again appointed fiscal agents for the State Department, taking the account over from Messrs. Morton, Rose & Company, and transferring it on the 10th of April, 1897, to Messrs. Seligman Brothers.

In 1875, Alexander Hargreaves Brown, the youngest grandson of Sir William Brown, became a partner in the firm. He had been a member of Parliament since 1863, representing in the first instance the Borough of Much Wenlock, and later, when that borough was abolished, the Wellington, or mid-division of Shropshire. His parliamentary service continued until 1905, when, after having served for thirty-eight years—one of the longest continuous terms in the history of the House—he declined to stand for reëlection.

In 1902 he received the following letter from Mr. Balfour, informing him of his appointment to a baronetcy—the third in the family:

10 Downing Street, WHITEHALL, S. W.

*7th November, 1902.*

MY DEAR HARGREAVES BROWN:

Having regard to your long Parliamentary career, it gives me very great satisfaction to be authorized to inform you that the King has graciously signified his intention to confer upon you the honor of a Baronetcy of the United Kingdom on the occasion of his Birthday.

(Signed) ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR.

In 1898, Lawrence Edlmann Chalmers, son of Frederick Chalmers, became a partner, having held power of attorney since 1892. In 1899, Edward Clifton Brown, nephew of Sir Alexander Hargreaves Brown, and great-

great-grandson of Alexander Brown, the founder of the firm, was admitted to the firm after having held power of attorney since 1898; and on January 1, 1900, Montagu Collet Norman, D. S. O., grandson of Sir Mark Collet, was also made a partner. He, too, had held power of attorney since January 1, 1898. All these young men had received their commercial education in the London office, and two of them, Messrs. Brown and Norman, also in the New York office. In 1907, Mr. Norman was elected a director of the Bank of England.

On October 1, 1897, James Leigh Wood, C. M. G., a former member of the firm of Basil, Montgomery, Fitzgerald & Company, stock-brokers, was made a partner. The business in London is now managed by these five gentlemen, Sir Alexander Hargreaves Brown, Bart., being the senior partner.

In 1881, Francis Mackenzie Ogilvie joined the staff in London as manager, with full power to sign for the firm. He had been for four or five years secretary and then sub-manager in the English Bank of Rio de Janeiro, now the British Bank of South America, Ltd., and had lived for a good many years in Entre Rios, Argentina. In 1888 he was given special authority to sign in the name of the firm, a practice occasionally followed in England but unknown in this country. He resigned his position as manager on the 31st of December, 1903, and was succeeded by Henry Maitland Kersey, D. S. O., who resigned on the 31st of December, 1907. In January of the preceding year Francis Hood Hope Simpson joined the London office, with full power to sign.

To relieve the pressure upon the office in Founders'



**Mr. Edward Clifton Brown**



**Mr. Lawrence Edlmann Chalmers**



Court, which could not well be enlarged, and to provide for the care and comfort of American travellers, a branch office in the West End was opened at 123 Pall Mall, April 2, 1900. This has proved a great convenience to the multitude of Americans using the firm's circular letters of credit, and has now become one of the recognized headquarters of American travellers in London. Charles William Heath was made manager, and in 1904 received power to sign for the firm per procuracy. This position he held till January 1, 1908, when, upon the resignation of Mr. Kersey, he was transferred to Founders' Court, and his place at the Pall Mall office taken by Henry John Doveton Clerk, with full power to sign for the firm there.

In the early days, when communication between the United States and the Continent was infrequent, and the number of travellers limited, circular letters of credit were issued by the Liverpool house only. American travellers received from the branch houses in America letters of advice and introduction which they were obliged to present at the Liverpool house to be exchanged for a circular credit on the firm's London bankers, Messrs. Heywood, Kennards & Company. As communication and travel increased this inconvenient method was abandoned. Circular letters of credit were issued by the American houses, at first on Messrs. Heywood, Kennards & Company, with a duplicate advice to the Liverpool house, and, on the opening of the London house in 1863, upon the London firm, drafts under these credits being paid, as is the usual custom in London, at the firm's bankers, now the London & Westminster Bank.

As a matter of courtesy, travellers' correspondence,



which in the early days was limited, was sent to the Liverpool house to be held or forwarded by them as directed. In recent years, with the great increase of travel between the two countries, the volume of this business has grown enormously. The record of the addresses of travellers, which used to be kept by one clerk in one book, has grown to such proportions that it has become necessary to change the system; and the addresses are now kept on the card-catalogue plan. Before this change was made, on the arrival of a heavy American mail in the morning, it was often impossible to readdress the letters for the evening mail, as but one—or at most two—clerks could use the record book at the same time. Even by the use of all-night work it was impossible to avoid delay, and the firm's clients were often inconvenienced and annoyed. Under the present system, making possible the simultaneous employment of many individuals, letters received in one day, however numerous, except under unusual conditions, can all be remailed on the same day.

Some indication of the volume of this business may be gained from the fact that in the months of July and August, 1906, which may be taken as typical summer months, the Pall Mall office handled 140,000 and 170,000 letters respectively, an average of from 8,000 to 9,000 letters for each mail day of the two months. In July, 1907, the number of letters handled on one day reached 15,000, and in August of the same year 16,000.

The largest mail ever handled by the firm on a single day consisted of from 20,000 to 25,000 letters. This large consignment, which was the result of four mails coming in together, was received in the summer of 1906, and took just two days to clear off.



**Mr. J. Leigh Wood, C. M. G.**



**Mr. Montagu Collet Norman, D. S. O.**

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The character of the average Monday mail during the two busiest months may be learned from the following analysis. During this period there were received:

Five hundred and twenty letters of instruction from travellers, all of which it was, of course, necessary to record on cards, and check before a single piece of mail matter could be dealt with;

Forty cables for repetition, some of them of considerable proportions;

Sixty registered letters, all requiring special attention;

Fifty-two packages;

Twelve Post-Office sacks of newspapers.

It may be of interest to know that in order to deal with this mail it has been necessary to have no less than thirty-three men working in the mail department at the same time in order to insure the punctual despatch of the letters by the evening's post.<sup>1</sup>

Although carefully printed instructions for the forwarding of mail are given to every traveller who applies for a circular letter of credit, it is astonishing to notice how little attention is paid to them. Two of the greatest problems the Pall Mall office has to contend with are the number of persons with the same names and the same initials, and the great difficulty in getting the users of circular credits to give their full names and titles (Miss or Mrs.), and, in the case of married women, their husband's names. The rule adopted by the Pall Mall office is, when there are two travellers of identical names, to send the mail—in the absence of any other indications—to the one first accred-

<sup>1</sup> The figures on which the above statements are based have been furnished by Mr. Heath, former manager of the Pall Mall office.

ited, with a request to return the letters, if not for him. An amusing incident occurred a few years ago in connection with mail belonging to a member of one of the families connected with the firm, who had failed to pay particular attention to the printed directions. A young gentleman who had been named for his uncle started early in the year for a trip round the world, and had his letters addressed to China. Later the uncle, well known in our Pall Mall office, went for a short trip on the Continent without giving any special directions to the Pall Mall office about his mail, which as a matter of course was sent to China, greatly to the amusement of one party and the annoyance of the other. Cases similar to this are of frequent occurrence.

The number of letters and telegrams received at the Pall Mall office with incomplete or blank instructions, without signature, and with all sorts of peculiar requests, is almost beyond belief. I append several specimens, first, of unsigned postals; secondly, of incomplete and unsigned telegrams; and thirdly, of letters showing the carelessness with which travellers' correspondents in America write to their friends in our care without any indication as to who these friends are.

(1) Among the postals received is one with very specific directions, but unsigned, which reads as follows:

**MESSRS. BROWN, SHIPLEY & Co.**

*Gentlemen:* I am leaving today (Sept. 11) by the Cunard S.S. *Carmania*—4.30 P.M. from Liverpool. Please forward any mail to Polyclinic Hospital.

18th & Lombard Sts, Philadelphia, U. S. A.

Tuesday morning.



UoFM

**Mr. Charles William Heath**

**Mr. Henry Maitland Kersey, D. S. O.**

**Mr. Francis Hood Hope Simpson**

**Mr. Henry John Doveton Clerk**

**Mr. Francis Mackenzie Ogilvie**

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Another gives a fine engraving of the Hotel Schweizerhof, Lucerne, and requests Brown, Shipley & Company to forward mail there, but is unfortunately unsigned.

Still another, unsigned, dated Cadanabbia, June 20, 1906, states specifically:

Have been called home on account of illness. Please forward all first class mail to me and destroy newspapers. My address in America where you will forward mail is

107 Ridgewood Road, Roland Park,  
Baltimore, Maryland, U. S. A.

Every traveller receives with his letter of credit a package of postal-cards with a blank form of instructions for forwarding mail. Great numbers of these are received not only without any signature but without any filled-in instructions.

(2) Among the numerous telegrams evidently intended for some individual, but addressed simply to the firm and signed either by initials or first names, I copy a few specimens.

WEST MALVERN.

BROWN SHIPLEY, PALL MALL, LONDON.

Uncle Len at Ritz Hotel London. See him.

MOTHER.

NEW YORK.

SHIPRAH, LONDON. Congratulations.

ED.

BAR HARBOR, MAINE.

SHIPRAH, LONDON.

Cannot assist without Mother's consent.

EVERETT.

ROUEN.

BROWN-SHIP, LONDON. Room two beds to-night.

DAVIS.



162 BROWN BROTHERS AND COMPANY

At the time of the receipt of this there were one dozen holders of credits of the name of Davis.

BROWN, SHIPLEY & Co. 123 Pall Mall, London, England.

Please wire me present address of Josias Pennington of Baltimore. (Unsigned)

As specimens of telegrams received about the forwarding of mail I insert the following:

MONTE CARLO.

BROWN, SHIPLEY & COMPANY, LONDON.

Mail letters now in hand to Genoa Post Restante. Hold later mail. (Unsigned)

MONTREUX.

BROWNSHIP, LONDON.

Don't arrive before Saturday morning.

MARY.

But the most singular telegram ever received by the firm is the following:

SHIPRAH, LONDON.

. . . . .  
Will you marry me? Cable yes immediately. \_\_\_\_\_

(S) Many of the letters addressed to the firm, but intended for some particular individual, are amusing, and some pathetic. A lady writes, without signature:

Eleanor is so tired out this morning after her strenuous day yesterday that I thought it was too much for her to come in town today.

The last page of the letter bears a childish scrawl and the explanation:

Brother wants to write to you, so this is his letter.



The London Office—Pall Mall

100

There is a pathetic letter from a little girl, simply addressed to Brown, Shipley & Company, but intended for her parents, in which she says that she feels lonely without them and has neuralgia. It closes, "Here comes the Doctor. Goodby. Thirza."

Another postmarked, "Back Bay Station, Boston, Mass.," begins, "Dearest Mary," and is simply signed "Mother."

Every effort is made to identify the parties for whom letters are intended by some allusions in the letters themselves, but rarely with any success. In this connection, Mr. Heath writes, "Letters addressed to Brown, Shipley & Company and not intended for us are of such frequent occurrence that we have about ceased to wonder at them." Telegrams and mail matter of this kind are usually exposed under a glass case in the Pall Mall office, and it is amusing to see the mortification of the travellers who come in prepared to find fault for failures to follow out their instructions, when they are confronted with an unsigned telegram or letter. At the end of the season anything which, after exhibition in our case, has not been claimed is sent back to the Post-Office.

It may not be inappropriate, in closing this account of the Liverpool and London offices, to make reference to some of the employees who served the concern in both cities for many years. The one who made the greatest impression upon me, probably because I had just entered upon my business career, was Mr. Byron, who had charge of the entire correspondence of the firm in the Liverpool office and who remained with the firm until his death. I must also mention Howland Roberts, who joined the staff at the

opening of the London office on the 17th of December, 1863. For several days he and Sir Mark Collet were the sole occupants of the office in Founders' Court. On the death of his brother he succeeded to the title and became Sir Howland Roberts, Bart. On the first of January, 1901, he received a limited power to sign for the firm.

On February 18, 1866, James Tyhurst joined the staff in London and for many years assisted Mr. Ogilvy in his work in that office, receiving power to sign checks in 1886, and in 1892 special authority to sign travelling credits. In 1899 he resigned to become manager of the Robinson South African Banking Company. On the 20th of September, 1904, at the West End office in Pall Mall, Arthur Hubert Johnson, a nephew of our late partner Mr. Hamilton, received limited power of attorney to sign checks, bills of exchange, etc.

Special mention must also be made of the man who for many years acted as cashier at the Founders' Court office, Robert Green. He was one of a number of the old clerks who were brought up in the Liverpool office and was transferred to London in March, 1870. He paid special attention to the comfort of our American travellers, and his sudden death of heart disease on the 31st of January, 1897, was a personal loss to many of our clientèle.

Mention should also be made of H. J. Metcalfe, who looked after the Travelling Credit Department in Founders' Court for many years during the summer months, from 1865 to 1893. He was succeeded by Robert Sale Hill, who is now in the Pall Mall office.

## CHAPTER X

### PHILADELPHIA

1818-1908. OPENING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HOUSE. JOHN A. BROWN & COMPANY. JOHN A. BROWN. BROWNS & BOWEN. BROWN BROTHERS & COMPANY.

AS already mentioned in Chapter II, Alexander Brown's third son, John, was sent, in 1818, to Philadelphia, then a city of some one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants, to open a branch there. While living in Baltimore he had been subjected to much inconvenience by the frequent delivery of letters intended for him to another John Brown. To avoid the confusion he adopted a middle initial letter "A," which did not stand for any name, and was thereafter known as John A. Brown.

An English writer,<sup>1</sup> describing Philadelphia at about this time, notes the fact that its character is essentially different from that of New York. It "has not so much business, not so much gayety, not so much life [as New York], but there is in Philadelphia a freedom from mere display, a relief from gaudy trappings, an evidence of solidarity, of which its more commercial rival is nearly destitute. The streets are clean, well and regularly built. First-rate private houses are numerous, as are also public

<sup>1</sup> "Narrative of a Journey Through . . . America," by Henry Bradshaw Fearon.

buildings; but their architecture is not of the highest order. The footpaths are impeded by an injudicious mode of constructing cellars by which they project into the street; and also by a very slovenly practice of the storekeepers, which is common in America, namely, placing quantities of loose goods outside their doors."

"Rents," he observes, "are about 25 per cent. lower than in New York. This, I would apprehend, does not proceed either from a comparative want of prosperity, from cheaper materials, or lower-priced labor, but from a more general equality of desirable situations, combined with the existence of more real, though perhaps less apparent, capital. It may be also that rents are influenced by the calculating habits of the Society of Friends, who reside here in great numbers."

Of the water he cannot speak so favorably. The quality of some of it may be estimated "from the experiment of Mr. Hunter, who, upon analyzing 220 gallons from a pump in Second Street, found it to contain the following ingredients: 12 oz. chalk, 32 oz. magnesia, 24 oz. common sea-salt."

The city, he further remarks, "suffers commercially from the fact that the Delaware, on which it is situated, is frequently frozen in winter; whereas, the port of New York is always open." His own visit was evidently made at a season which exposed no obstacles to navigation, for he tells us that "when our boat arrived we were inundated with porters, the greatest part of them . . . blacks—the rest Irish," adding this characteristic note: "They had tin plates on their hats or breasts, upon which were written their names and residences."



Mr. John A. Brown



1900

The following advertisement in "The Union, United States Gazette and True American," published in Philadelphia, Saturday morning, October 10, 1818, announced the opening of the house:

**IRISH LINENS**

**JOHN A. BROWN & Co.**  
No. 174 Market Street,<sup>1</sup>  
*Importers of Irish Linens,*

Have just received a complete assortment of 3-4, 7-8 and 4-4 Linens,

3-4 and 7-8 Brown Hollands,

5-4 Sheeting,

5-8 and 7-8 Lawns

3-4 Diapers, and Dowlass.

All of which will be sold very low for good paper.

J. A. B. & Co. take this opportunity of informing those who have been in the habit of purchasing the Linens imported by Alexander Brown & Sons, of Baltimore, that the above firm is a branch of that concern and that both houses will import a constant supply of Cheap Linens.

By the first arrivals we expect a supply of 6-4, 7-4, 8-4, 10-4 and 12-4 Diapers and Damask.<sup>2</sup>

Owing to the death, in 1820, of John A. Brown's first wife, Isabella Patrick of Ballymena, he returned to Baltimore. This sad event was mentioned in a letter written by Alexander Brown & Sons to William and James Brown & Company, which, according to their usual

<sup>1</sup> Soon after, just when is not known, the firm of John A. Brown & Co. removed to 126 Chestnut Street.

<sup>2</sup> On the same date, October 10, 1818, the above advertisement also appeared in Poulson's "American Daily Advertiser."

practice, contained also reference to important business transactions:

25 February, 1820.

DEAR SIRS:

Our fears about Isabella we are sorry to say have been realized. She departed this life on the 19th, perfectly sensible to the last, and an hour before, she took leave of her friends & children one by one. She then slept a little & departed without a struggle. This affliction is severely felt by us all, but poor John is almost distracted and except an egg beat up in a little wine has taken no nourishment since. A. B. & John Patrick brot. the body on to be interred here, which was done on Tuesday last. John was so much exhausted and overcome both in body and mind, he could not accompany it. Mrs. A. B. remains with him and the children and our A. B. & Jno. Patrick return to Philadelphia on Monday by the steam boats which have commenced running. We hope they will find him more composed, but the loss to him is irreparable.

Your letters of 6th, 7th, 14th, & 15th Decr. are rec'd. The purchase of the Swedish Iron we think must be a good one. We will apply to Kizer for the specification. If he cannot give it, we must assort it.

The draft on Thomas Sheppard for net proceeds Mr. Prentiss guns was due on 19th & he paid it by a good note due in New York at 90 days, We have made our Mr. Prentiss  $\frac{3}{4}\%$ . The balance due him, £396.4, which you will transfer to his credit as a 60 day bill. Make out his account and balance it, transferring the balance to our credit which we will settle with him here. Send the account to us.

We have drawn No. 536 £182.6 favour Jno. Carriere at st. 23 Feb.

537 3714.6 " Andw. Richardson

538 11 Cath. Flanagan at. st. 24 "

Mr. Carriere has settled with us the difference between the amount of the above bill and the amount placed to our credit on his  $\frac{3}{4}\%$ . . . .

Yours A. B. & S.

While John A. Brown was in Baltimore his place was taken by his brother James, who remained in charge of

the Philadelphia house until 1823, when he returned to Baltimore. During his residence in Philadelphia an infant son died, and the sad news was conveyed, as in the previous instance, to Messrs. William and James Brown & Company by Messrs. Alexander Brown & Sons in a regular office letter with items of current business.

GENTLEMEN:

19 October, 1820.

By James who returns to Philadelphia this evening we forward this. He came in this morning with his infant who died in Philadelphia on 17th inst. after only 10 days of illness of a complaint in its bowels and which from the time it was taken was unyielding to any treatment. It was interred this morning in our own ground. A. B. we are happy to say is much better today. His cough is nearly gone and he has had no return of fever. He is today moving about in his room and we trust will be out in a few days. The *Exchange* is chartered to go to St. Thomas for \$2000. It's but little out of her way going to Orleans, to which place it's our intention to order her. She commences loading tomorrow, so that the *Armata* will go to Savannah as soon as she can go there with safety.

In 1823, John, who had meanwhile married Grace Brown, a daughter of Dr. George Brown of Baltimore, resumed control in Philadelphia. At some time during his residence there, probably soon after his establishment, he associated with himself as partner Johnston McLanahan, a bachelor brother of the wife of George Brown of Baltimore, then engaged in business as a merchant in Philadelphia.

As stated in Chapter II, Alexander Brown & Sons opened the Philadelphia house to keep control of their clientèle in Maryland and adjacent States, who found it more to their advantage to purchase certain classes of

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goods in Philadelphia than in Baltimore. As Philadelphia was a better port for the shipment of goods to and from England, and as it soon had a regular line of packets to the old country, the trade of the Baltimore house was gradually transferred thither. Until 1825, when the New York house was opened, the largest part of the business of the firms was conducted in Philadelphia.

After the panic of 1837, John A. Brown, whose health had been somewhat impaired by nervous strain, sold out his interest to his brothers and retired from the firm. He, with his partner, Johnston McLanahan, however, remained in charge of the business in Philadelphia and managed it for the benefit and at the risk of the other firms until the first of June, 1839, when formal notice of dissolution was published and the dry goods part of the business was taken over by Johnston McLanahan under the firm name of Johnston McLanahan & Company.<sup>1</sup>

Poulson's "American Advertiser" of Philadelphia, under date of Monday, June 3, 1839, published the following notice:

**JOHN A. BROWN & JOHNSTON McLANAHAN**, of Philadelphia, retiring from the house of Alex. Brown & Sons, of Baltimore, John A. Brown & Co., of Philadelphia, Brown Brothers & Co., of New York, and Wm. & Jas. Brown & Co., of Liverpool, these

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that although John A. Brown had retired, his interest in the success of the firm still continued, and in 1840 we find him signing for the firm of Browns & Bowen by power of attorney, probably in exceptional cases. His private office for the management of his own personal business continued to be in the office of Browns & Bowen, and Brown Brothers & Company, until the day of his death, and was continued there by his son Alexander, and his grandson John A. Brown, Jr., until the office was removed to the corner of Fourth and Chestnut Streets.



concerns stand dissolved; but all or any of the partners are authorized to receive their debts, settle their accounts, and use the signature of the firm in liquidation.

Witness our hand this 1st day of June, 1839.

(Signed) WM. BROWN  
 GEORGE BROWN  
 JOHN A. BROWN  
 JAMES BROWN  
 STEWART BROWN  
 JOSEPH SHIPLEY  
 JOHN MOORE PRIESTMAN  
 WILLIAM E. BOWEN  
 JOHNSTON McLANAHAN  
 SAML. NICHOLSON  
 HERMAN H. PERRY

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The undersigned intend to continue the business, as hitherto conducted by John A. Brown & Co., under the firm of BROWNS & BOWEN, and will act as the agents of Brown, Shipley & Co., of Liverpool.

Philadelphia, 1st June, 1839.

(Signed) GEORGE BROWN  
 JAMES BROWN  
 WM. E. BOWEN

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The undersigned, acting partners in the late firm of Wm. & Jas. Brown & Co. of Liverpool, intend to continue business under the firm of BROWN, SHIPLEY & CO.—Alexander Brown & Sons, of Baltimore, Browns & Bowen, of Philadelphia, and Brown Brothers & Co., of New York, will represent us in the United States.

Liverpool, 1st June, 1839.

(Signed) WM. BROWN  
 JOSEPH SHIPLEY  
 JOHN MOORE PRIESTMAN.

1839

J. McLANAHAN & CO. will continue as heretofore the Dry Goods Commission Business of the late firm of John A. Brown & Co., in Philadelphia, that branch of the business having been transferred to them.

Philadelphia, June 1st, 1839.

John A. Brown lived to a good old age, dying December 31, 1872, in his eighty-fourth year. While good judgment, shrewd knowledge of men, alertness in seizing good opportunities for investment were among his marked characteristics, he was the most conservative of all the four brothers and less fitted by temperament than William and James for the competition and hurry of modern business life. Retiring from the firm in 1837, he yet retained his connection with many leading financial institutions of the city, in the management of which he exercised a powerful influence. Turning his early training to good account, and using excellent judgment in his selection of investments at a time when the early development of railroads in the United States afforded rare opportunities for profitable ventures, he amassed an ample fortune which it was his pleasure to use in the most unostentatious way, in furthering the interests of the leading philanthropic enterprises of the city.

He was a great friend and admirer of the Rev. Albert Barnes, of whose church he was a devoted member. When, owing to the growth of the city a new church seemed to be required further up-town, he, with other members, at the earnest request of his pastor, left the old site, and organized the Calvary Presbyterian Church in Locust Street, toward the erection of which he was a generous contributor. It was also owing to Mr. Barnes's



influence that he became warmly interested in the work of the New School Branch of the Presbyterian Church. Through his influence and assistance and that of his friend and neighbor, Matthew W. Baldwin, that branch of the church became the owner of the Presbyterian House on Chestnut Street. He was also one of the members of the American Sunday School Union, to which during all his life he was a generous contributor.

Mr. Brown was not an indiscriminate giver, but when after investigation he was convinced of the merit of any project, his money and his personal influence followed as a matter of course. In such matters he was mainly his own counsellor. His plans for beneficence were thought out by himself and shaped so as to last when he should be gone. This was notably the case in his gift of \$300,000 to the Presbyterian Hospital a short time before his death. The building had been remodelled, the property freed from debt and the institution put in good working order by the indefatigable labor of Dr. Samuel Saunders, and by numerous contributions from the trustees and others; but as yet no proper endowment had been secured for its maintenance. It was while Mr. Brown was confined to his sick-chamber during his last illness that this gift was made, with the condition that its income be devoted entirely to the current expenses of the institution.

Mr. Brown's interest in good works was continued by his only son Alexander Brown, who, while not a member of the firm, maintained the unofficial connection which had existed in his father's days. His office, as already mentioned, formed part of the private office of the firm, separated from it only by a slight partition, and opening



into the general office where his private secretary had his desk adjoining that of one of the clerks of the firm. Mr. Brown was a man of exceptionally fine character, one of Philadelphia's most esteemed citizens, of modest, retiring disposition, generous to a degree. He used a large part of his income for the religious and philanthropic work of the city.

In 1839, William E. Bowen, who had been representing the house in Manchester,<sup>1</sup> England, since 1831, and was a partner resident in Liverpool in 1837, was transferred to the Philadelphia house, and the name of the firm was changed to Browns & Bowen. When Mr. Bowen assumed the management there, the effects of the disastrous panic of 1837 had not yet disappeared. It had not then been determined whether the house in Philadelphia would be maintained as a permanency. On July 31, 1840, he writes to Mr. Shipley:

It will take some time for things to settle down to a sober basis. You will have learnt that since my return, J. B. has considered it advisable to continue the house here for a season and I shall be glad if by my exertions I can make it answer for a permanency, as so many changes are to me very unpleasant. I am happy to say that my family are well. I have my oldest son with me in the office and with Mr. Perry's brother, my bookkeeper, it is my whole force here. When a man has a son old enough to go to business, it is time to settle.

The continuance of the Philadelphia office as a prosperous establishment was due to Mr. Bowen's hard work and good management.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. F. A. Hamilton knew Mr. Bowen well when he was in Manchester. He used to travel constantly between Philadelphia and Manchester, England.



**Mr. William Ezra Bowen**

WroU

As will appear from Mr. Bowen's letter, the force at first was small. The office was in the rear of the old store occupied by John A. Brown & Company, the front being used by Johnston McLanahan & Company. It was on the south side of Chestnut Street, probably No. 126, between Front and Second Streets. Subsequently, as the business increased, the office was enlarged and Mr. Bowen moved to quarters on the opposite side of the street, Nos. 209 and 211.

Mr. Bowen was a man of excellent judgment and foresight, and, as far as I can learn, was the first of the partners in any of the firms to foresee that steamers would supplant sailing vessels for the transportation of merchandise. Writing again to Mr. Shipley, July 12, 1844, he says:

I note your remarks on the provision trade, &c., in connection with Cope's, and fully coincide with you. Henry Cope seemed so anxious to obtain something to fill up the gap which the withdrawal of the *Shenandoah* made, that he asked me to cast around and see what we could do for them. The ship they are building will be every thing that can be desired. I have seen her frame, and it is strong as wood and metal can make it, and I should think will sail fast. I should be very loth to build a ship now *for sails*. I fully believe that within five or ten years, steam will be the motive power of our merchantmen. Improvements have been made in the Erickson Propeller, and steam is rapidly taking the place of sails for our coasters, and the size of the vessels daily increasing. The increased consumption of coal will be a great thing for Pennsylvania. Her anthracite coal answers well for steam.

Mr. Bowen continued a partner until 1859, when he retired owing to ill-health. He died in 1861. After his retirement the name of the Philadelphia house was changed

to Brown Brothers & Company,<sup>1</sup> and conducted as an agency of the New York house by Thomas Hassell Kirtley, a brother-in-law of Mr. Bowen, who had been in the employ of the firm since 1840, and William Henry Williams. They were appointed joint agents December 1, 1859, and this joint agency continued until 1860, when a full power of attorney to sign for the firm was given to each of the gentlemen. In 1861, Mr. Williams's eyesight began to fail, and he went abroad in the hope of curing the trouble. He remained abroad eighteen months without receiving any benefit, and, becoming totally blind about 1863, he retired from active service with the firm. Though blind and, after 1878, paralyzed from the waist down, he continued for many years in the employ of John A. Brown and of his grandson, John A. Brown, Jr. He had a most remarkable memory, and, though unable to read, kept in touch with the Messrs. Brown's private business, and was often consulted by Messrs. Kirtley and Dawson about the business of Brown Brothers & Company, upon which he had kept himself posted. Indeed, as late as 1880 he was of great service to the Philadel-

<sup>1</sup> "The North American and United States Gazette" published the following advertisement Friday, December 2, 1859:

PHILADELPHIA, December 1, 1859.

Our Mr. William E. Bowen having been obliged, much to our regret, to retire from business on account of the state of his health, ceases this day to be a partner in the firm of

BROWNS & BOWEN, Philadelphia,  
BROWN, SHIPLEY & Co., Liverpool and  
BROWN BROTHERS & Co., of New York and

other cities in the United States.

The business in Philadelphia will in the future be conducted under the firm of Brown Brothers & Co.

BROWN BROTHERS & Co.



**Mr. William Henry Williams**  
**Mr. Thomas Hassell Kirtley**

**Mr. John A. Brown, Jr.**  
**Mr. John C. Dawson**

Wol

phia office, as is evident from the following letter from Mr. Delano:

Mr. Williams, when I went to Philadelphia in 1880, was blind and paralyzed in both legs, and used often to be carried into the office by a colored man servant. His mind was perfectly clear and his abilities and judgment of a high order. Given any business matter for consideration, his grasp and elucidation were strong and clear, and his judgment and advice were much sought by those who knew him. He was especially conversant with gas matters and when the large interests of Alexander Brown<sup>1</sup> and John A. Brown, Jr. in the Detroit Gas Company were, with the holdings of other large shareholders, sold, Mr. Williams conducted, almost entirely, the negotiations. He was just beginning to use his abilities as a negotiator in other directions which promised him remuneration he much needed, when he was taken away. We were ourselves entering in Philadelphia upon large and important operations at that time, and when he chanced to come into the office, I often consulted with him and found his business judgment clear and sound and very helpful. He held the confidence and affectionate regard of John A. Brown, Jr. in a very marked degree.

Mr. Williams's place was taken by John Collins Dawson, who had entered the service of the firm as a boy of fourteen in 1839, and whose father, Job Dawson, had been with John A. Brown & Company since the time of their establishment in 1818. At first he was employed by Johnston McLanahan & Company who had taken over the dry goods part of the business of John A. Brown & Company, but he soon joined the staff of Browns & Bowen and remained with them and their successors until his death on April 29, 1883.

Of Mr. Dawson, Mr. Delano writes: "I was under

<sup>1</sup> Son of John A. Brown.



John C. Dawson from the time of my entrance into the office of Brown Brothers & Company in Philadelphia, on April 5, 1880, until Mr. Dawson's death.

"He was a man of unusual intelligence and uniform courtesy, careful, capable and safe in the management of the business as then carried on at 209 Chestnut Street. He held the business together and slowly added to it by his fairness and reasonableness in dealing with the customers of the house. He was distinctly true and upright, uniformly patient and unselfish in his bearing towards me. I had a sincere respect and regard for him, and owe much to him in my early efforts to understand and assimilate the underlying principles of the exchange and credit business. The modest and simple character of the business then done at 209 Chestnut Street gave me a great opportunity to grasp it, and to Mr. Dawson's considerate and intelligent guidance and explanations I have always felt greatly indebted."

In 1865, John A. Brown, Jr., grandson of John A. Brown, Sr. (who had been in the office since 1860), was associated with Messrs. Kirtley and Dawson. He retired in 1875 and was succeeded by James Brown Potter, a son of Howard Potter and grandson of James Brown.

Mr. Kirtley retired in 1877 and the management of the Philadelphia house was left for a time with John C. Dawson alone; but April 5, 1880, Eugene Delano, a brother-in-law of the writer and a merchant of established reputation in New York, was added to the Philadelphia staff, and on the death of Mr. Dawson, in 1883, assumed control, assisted in the first instance by Gilbert de Saumarez Hamilton, a nephew of our London partner,



**Mr. George Harrison Frazier**



**Mr. James Crosby Brown**

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Mr. Hamilton, and in 1885, on his retirement, by Charles Denston Dickey, Jr., son of Charles Denston Dickey of New York, who remained in Philadelphia until the spring of 1887, when he was transferred to New York.

On his arrival in Philadelphia Mr. Delano was warmly welcomed by Mr. Alexander Brown, who, from his long residence in Philadelphia and acquaintance with the best people, was in a position to be of much assistance to a stranger like Mr. Delano, and who, by his presence in the office and his frequent and valued counsel, contributed much to the success of his administration of the affairs of the firm.

In 1887, owing to the pressure of business in connection with the reorganization of the Reading Railroad Company and the necessity for an additional signature in Philadelphia, Charles F. Hoffman, resident agent of the firm in New Orleans, spent the summer in the Philadelphia office, returning to New Orleans at the opening of the cotton season.

On Mr. Dickey's transfer to New York, James May Duane, great-grandson of Benjamin Franklin and a warm friend of Howard Potter, joined Mr. Delano in Philadelphia, and the office was still further strengthened by the granting of a power of attorney to John C. Dawson, Jr.,<sup>1</sup> who had entered the office as a junior clerk in 1880.

Under the management of Mr. Delano, the business of the firm in Philadelphia increased to such an extent and the house assumed such importance that it was thought best that the firm should again be represented there by a

<sup>1</sup> Son of John C. Dawson, who died in 1883.

partner. On January 1, 1894, therefore, Eugene Delano became a partner, resident in Philadelphia. Subsequently, when Mr. Delano was transferred to New York in the autumn of 1895, Mr. Duane took his place and became a partner January 1, 1896. On the first of January, 1897, in anticipation of the transfer of Mr. Duane to New York (which occurred on August 1, 1898), power of attorney to sign for the firm was given to George Harrison Frazier, who had for many years previous been actively engaged in business in Philadelphia, and on the first of January, 1898, he became a partner. At the same time, James Crosby Brown, son of John Crosby Brown, a direct descendant of the founder of the firm in the fourth generation, who had received his early training in the New York office, was authorized to sign for the firm in Philadelphia. He became a member of the firm, with residence in Philadelphia, January 1, 1904.

In January, 1899, James Brown Markoe, a great grandson of John A. Brown, and thus a representative of the founder, Alexander Brown, in the fifth generation, who had been for some years receiving his training in the Philadelphia and New York offices, was given a power of attorney to sign for the firm. He was the son of Emily, eldest daughter of Alexander Brown, and of John Markoe, a well-known man of high standing in Philadelphia, who served with distinction in the Civil War and was Brevet Brigadier-General when the results of his wounds and imprisonment obliged him to resign at the age of twenty-three. His son had the same fine character and distinction. He was a favorite at Harvard, where he was a member of the class of 1889. He rowed on the University crew,



**Mr. James Brown Markoe**  
**Mr. Nathaniel Knowles**

**Mr. James Brown Potter**  
**Mr. John C. Dawson, Jr.**

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as well as on his Class crew as a Freshman, and played on the University foot-ball team.

On his graduation from Harvard, he went round the world, and on his return entered the Philadelphia office. After several years of training there, he went to New York for three years, returning in January, 1899, when he was given a full power of attorney for the firm in Philadelphia. This position he still held at the time of his death, which occurred under tragic circumstances, on November 29, 1902.

Mr. Markoe lost his life in a brave and successful attempt to save the lives of three friends who were with him in a carriage in a narrow and crowded street. When the horses had begun to run away, and the coachman was seen to be no longer on the box, Mr. Markoe left his seat, climbed over the vacant box to the pole and from this precarious position endeavored to stop the now maddened horses by guiding them against a wall. While making this attempt he was struck by a post, thrown to the ground, and instantly killed, but the horses were stopped and the lives of his companions were saved.

By Mr. Markoe's premature death the firm lost one of its most promising members. His integrity and devotion to duty, his self-command and unselfish nature, endeared him to all who knew him and made him, in the words of one of his associates, "a powerful influence for good." One who knew him well, commenting on his tragic end, well said: "His heroism was only equalled by the fine and cool judgment of the act, and showed the quality in which he excelled."

There has seldom been a more remarkable gathering of



representative men in Philadelphia than that which met on December 2, 1902, in St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church, of which Mr. Markoe was a vestryman, to pay the last tribute of respect at his funeral.<sup>1</sup>

In 1905 power of attorney to sign for the firm was given to Nathaniel Knowles, who entered the office in 1887, and is still a member of the Philadelphia staff.

For thirty years the Philadelphia office was on the ground floor of No. 209 Chestnut Street, which was owned

<sup>1</sup> No more fitting appreciation could be given of him than a poem written in memory of his heroic death by Edith Wharton, published in "Scribner's Magazine" of April, 1903, from which the following is an extract:

But who are those that linking hand in hand,  
Transmit across the twilight waste of years  
The flying brightness of a kindled hour?  
Not always, nor alone, the lives that search  
How they may snatch a glory out of heaven  
Or add a height to Babel; oftener they  
That in the still fulfilment of each day's  
Pacific order hold great deeds in leash,  
That in the sober sheath of tranquil tasks  
Hide the attempered blade of high emprise,  
And leap like lightning to the clap of fate.

So greatly gave he, nurturing 'gainst the call  
Of one rare moment all the daily store  
Of joy distilled from the acquitted task,  
And that deliberate rashness which bespeaks  
The pondered action passed into the blood;  
So swift to harden purpose into deed  
That, with the wind of ruin in his hair,  
Soul sprang full-statured from the broken flesh,  
And at one stroke he lived the whole of life,  
Poured all in one libation to the truth,  
A brimming cup whose drops shall overflow  
On deserts of the soul long beaten down  
By the brute hoof of habit, till they spring  
In manifold upheaval to the sun.



**The Philadelphia Office**

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by a member of the family, the National Bank of Commerce occupying the second floor. The office was, however, too small for the expanding business and was sold to the Bank of Commerce. In 1887 a new office building was erected (also by a member of the family) on the southeast corner of Fourth and Chestnut Streets, where the business is now carried on.

At the present time, to accommodate the growing business, the office is being enlarged and occupies all the ground floor of the building.

## CHAPTER XI

### NEW YORK

1825-1837. BROWN BROTHERS & CO. OPENING AND EARLY YEARS OF THE NEW YORK HOUSE. THE PANIC OF 1826.

**F**OR the reasons already mentioned in Chapter II, James Brown was sent to New York in the autumn of 1825, the year of the opening of the Erie Canal. He took temporary quarters at 191 Pearl Street,<sup>1</sup> and later, probably in May of the following year, he established himself at 63 Pine Street, then near the centre of the dry goods district of the city, the front part of the building being used to display the goods, the office being in the rear.<sup>2</sup> Here, a few months later, he was joined by his cousin, Stewart Brown of Baltimore, who in 1827 became his partner.

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to John Cumming & Son, of November 15th, 1825, Mr. Brown writes: "As our names are not in the Directory, it will be well in drawing on us to direct your drafts to 191 Pearl Street, where we shall remain until we see a warehouse quite to our mind and that may not occur until May, the great moving time.

<sup>2</sup> At the same time, probably soon after his arrival, the building was bought either by himself or his brother William. It was sold in 1873 for about the same price that was paid for it. Property in Pine Street declined rapidly in value after the dry goods business left the neighborhood, and remained dead and almost unsalable until the last few years, when, through its connection with Wall Street, it became extremely valuable.



**Mr. James Brown**

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When James Brown reached New York the principal residence parts of the city were at the Battery and at Bowling Green, in East Broadway, Market, Henry and adjacent streets, and in the streets between Broadway and West Broadway from Barclay to Canal. There were few private houses above Canal Street. He first lived in a rented house on the south side of Canal Street, but as this was rather far uptown, and, according to the standard of those days, at too great a distance from his office, he built a large English basement house in Leonard Street, No. 80, where the writer was born.<sup>1</sup>

The condition of New York at the end of the first quarter of the century is vividly brought before us in the following comments by James Stuart, a Scotch traveller who visited America about this time:<sup>2</sup>

I had heard much of the beauty of the approach to New York from the sea; but the reality altogether exceeded my expectation. It is undoubtedly one of the most magnificent scenes in the world. . . . Much of the city is not visible from the water,—the island on which it is built consisting of undulating, but not, in any part, of elevated ground. Still the spires of the churches make a brilliant appearance, gilded by the setting sun, and towering among the trees which shade the streets, and amongst the masts of the ships, surrounding the city on all sides but the north. The situation of the city, projected into

<sup>1</sup> Even as late as 1855, what was known as the "Bull's Head Cattle Market" occupied the blocks between Fifth and Fourth Avenues, a short distance above Forty-second Street, and as late as 1850 the writer went to a school in Dey Street which had a large playground in the rear extending to Vesey Street. There were also large open spaces in Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Streets between Fifth and Sixth Avenues; the Fifth and Sixth Avenue fronts, however, were tolerably well built up as far as Forty-second Street.

<sup>2</sup> "Three Years in North America," by James Stuart, Esq., Edinburgh, 1833. The exact date of Mr. Stuart's visit to New York was August 23, 1828.



the bay on the southern part of the island, is a very remarkable one. The island, which is twelve or thirteen miles long, by one and a half broad, has all the appearance of a narrow promontory, open to the sea on all sides but the north, on which it is separated from the adjoining country by the Haerlem River, over which there are long wooden bridges.

Nothing could be more gay than the appearance of the streets, especially Broadway, the favorite promenade, which is what Queen-street formerly was in Edinburgh on summer evenings, and what Bond-street or Regent-street now is in London; and the shops (here called stores), many of them very handsome and lighted with gas, crowded with population, which the excessive warmth had kept in the house during the day, also arrested our attention.

The population [of New York] in 1825 was 166,000. . . . Broadway, the chief street, is between 3 and 4 miles long when the plan of the city is completed. It is 80 feet broad—contains the best shops, several of the handsomest churches and dwelling-houses, and on one side of it, for a considerable way, has a fine open space called the Park, on which stands the City Hall. This hall, in which the courts are held, is the only very striking building. It is advantageously situated in the very heart of the city, with a large open area around it, laid out in gravel walks, with trees on each side of them, and well inclosed with a massive iron railing. . . . In short, my notion is, that, though there is no very fine building in this city, there is not much to hurt the eye of the fastidious; and the city is generally composed of clean-looking buildings and streets, and is regularly built. There are still many buildings of wood, and frequent fires.

Besides the area surrounding the city hall, the extent of which is only 10 or 12 acres, there is not one large vacant space in the city, excepting a piece of ground of about the same size laid out as pleasure-ground, called the Battery, at the southern extremity of Broadway, and adjoining the Bay. Its situation, and the views from it are delightful, but its extent far too limited. . . .



**Mr. Stewart Brown**

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Mr. Stuart comments on the deficiency of water, both "in quantity and quality. Much of it is brought in carts from a considerable distance, and sold at a high price." He was puzzled with a sign at No. 321 Broadway: "Intelligence Office. Male and female help can be obtained by applying at this office," and explains for the benefit of his less instructed readers that "servants here do not like the name, and are frequently called Helps, so that the meaning of the notice is that servants can be obtained there."

On contemporary manners we find this interesting note: "We have only yet had an opportunity of seeing one instance of the greater courtesy paid to females in this country, of which we have heard so much. In passing across the ferry to Brooklyn, my wife, and three gentlemen who accompanied her, were seated when some females came into the boat, and all the seats were occupied. Their male attendant at once addressed those gentlemen, 'Ladies, gentlemen'; and they of course relinquished their seats."

When Mr. Brown first came to New York there were three rival routes to Philadelphia, two by water and stage and one by stage throughout. One of the water routes was by steamboat through the Narrows and outer Bay to Perth Amboy, and then by stage across the State of New Jersey, through New Brunswick and Princeton to Trenton, and thence by boat down the Delaware River to Philadelphia. The other was by boat through the Kills by Staten Island and up the Raritan River to New Brunswick, and thence by stage through Princeton, Trenton, etc., and by boat to Philadelphia. By the land route,

the stage crossed the ferry to Hoboken, or Paulus Hook, now Jersey City, and then passed through Elizabethtown, New Brunswick, Princeton, Trenton, Bristol and Frankfort. In making the journey from Philadelphia to New York by the land route the stage was sometimes late, and I have heard my father say that as the ferry-boat ceased running soon after 7 P. M., passengers were transferred in row-boats.<sup>1</sup> I reproduce on another page from the "New York Daily Advertiser" of January 12, 1826, the paper in which the original announcement of the opening of Brown Brothers & Company appeared, facsimiles of the advertisements of the different routes.

Even in my boyhood, as late as 1852 or 1853, the journey from New York to Philadelphia by the fastest train took four hours. The New Jersey Railroad and Transportation Company owned the road from Jersey City to New Brunswick, and the Camden and Amboy road from New Brunswick to Trenton and Camden, opposite Philadelphia, and, as a matter of course, engines were changed at New Brunswick. It was not until December, 1852, that the Pennsylvania Railroad crossed the summit of the Alleghany Mountains, and then only by making temporary use of the State's Portage Railroad. In October, 1851, the Baltimore & Ohio, the oldest of American railroads, only reached Cumberland, Maryland, and the Superintendent of the Census in his report of 1852, describes the Erie as "the longest continuous line of railroad in the world," giving its length as 469 miles.

<sup>1</sup> At that time the ferry-boats crossing the river were run by steam, but as late as 1810, the Catherine Street Ferry on the East River was run by horse power, and that system prevailed along the upper Hudson until well into the fifties.

...agent, New York, ...  
...Jesse Smith, Taunton.

**FOR PHILADELPHIA.**



*Exchange Line through in one day.*  
By the Steam Boat BOLIVAR, via Staten Island, New Brunswick, Princeton & Trenton. 12 miles less land carriage than any other daily line now running.  
The Steam Boat Bolivar, will leave White-Hall dock every morning at 6 o'clock, with passengers of the Exchange Line for Philadelphia, and arrive the same afternoon. Fare through \$5.  
By the present arrangement it will be necessary for Passengers to call the day previous at the office No. 29 Washington-street, or at the Steam Boat Office, White Hall Dock, and at the bar of the New-York Hotel by J. Waterman 162 Greenwich-street, and secure their seats as there is but one Coach attached to the line. All goods and baggage at the owners' risk.

**WINTER ARRANGEMENT.**

**UNION TRANSPORTATION LINE,** between New-York and Philadelphia, via Perth-Amboy, New-Brunswick and Trenton, winter arrangement. During the obstructions of steam-boat navigation, this Line will forward merchandise, &c. by sloops to Perth-Amboy, and from thence to Philadelphia in waggons. For freight, apply to  
**HILL, FISH & ARBE,**  
No. 16 Washington-street.

**ESTABLISHMENT—UNION LINE.**  
At 6 and 10 o'clock, A. M. daily.

**FOR PHILADELPHIA,**  
through in one day, via Hoboken steam-boat ferry, Elizabethtown, New-Brunswick, Princeton, Trenton, Bristol, and Frankfort.

Leaves the Office, York House, No. 5 Courtlandt-st. every morning at 6 o'clock, and arrives at Philadelphia early the same evening. — Fare through, \$5.  
Second Line of Coaches leaves the above Office every day at 10 o'clock, A. M. lodge at Trenton, and arrives at Philadelphia 10 o'clock the following morning. Fare through \$4.  
P. M.—The Baltimore Union Line's coaches leave Philadelphia every morning at 8 o'clock. Express and extra coaches furnished whenever called for.  
For seats, apply at York House, No. 5 Courtlandt-st. second Stage Office Down Broadway.  
The Boston and Albany Coaches start from No. 5 Courtlandt-st.  
\* \* \* All goods, baggage and specie at the risk of the owners thereof.  
**WM. B. JAKES,**  
Agent for Tatum & Bayles, Proprietors.

Advertisements of Different Routes from New York to Philadelphia

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The following letter from Stewart Brown to his mother gives an amusing account of a journey from Baltimore to New York in 1826:

NEW YORK, 26 July, 1826.

MY DEAR MOTHER:

I left my native city as you know with a disconsolate heart, and the first half hour on board the boat was spent by me in witnessing the recession of its lofty domes and spires, or rather their apparent recession, for it was I and not they who moved, for they still remain where they have ever stood and where I hope and expect frequently to see them. When I first went on board the boat I was introduced by some of my friends to two young gentlemen, the one a Netherlander, the other a Frenchman, but a resident of Aux Cayes, in the West Indies, both of whom made themselves very agreeable; by the former I was introduced to two Canadian ladies of whom he seemed in part protector. They, I understood, were maiden Ladies and both appeared desirous of appearing some ten or twenty years younger than nature loudly proclaimed them to be; one of them was rising fifty, I should think, the other was I am inclined to believe very near the shady side of thirty. Of the gentlemen, beside those I have already spoken of, or indeed of any of the rest of the passengers I can say but little, as I did not become acquainted with them nor did I feel any inclination that way; for such an unseemly unprepossessing set of people I never met with; among them were some sots, a hen peck[ed] husband and his termagant wife and divers other unenviable characters, and with this company I sailed from Balto. to Philadelphia. The afternoon and night of Saturday were intensely hot. To sleep on board was out of the question, and I spent the greater part of the time I was on the water on the deck of the boat; that part of the night occupied in crossing the land I endeavoured to sleep, but could only succeed in getting about twenty minutes repose, and when I got on board the Delaware boat I slept about a half an hour longer. When I arrived at Philad<sup>a</sup> I found Mr. McKee on the wharf and at his solicitation accompanied him to his boarding house, kept by Mrs. Linn, which I found a very comfortable house and the old lady a very kind one. I remained there all Sunday and left it at 6 o'clock on Monday morn-



ing. I met Capt. Hobson and his daughters there; he did not leave until the next day, and has just arrived here with Mr. Adger of Charleston and his wife, all in good health, though the Captain had a severe attack of Cholera in Ph<sup>a</sup>.

In the boat from Philad<sup>a</sup> we had about 100 passengers with but one of whom I was acquainted and that was J. H. B. Morton, who keeps a retail store in Balto.; at New Brunswick our number increased to about double, so that we had a very crowded boat the remainder of our passage.

I arrived here about 6 o'clock on Monday evening and found all friends well. I was surprised to see Mrs. Brown look so well and am in hope, when she returns from the North, whither she and James went this morning, that she will be quite restored.

. . . And now, my dear Mother, accept for yourself the affection of,  
Yrs. sincerely, S. BROWN.

The following circular, announcing the establishment of the firm of Brown Brothers & Company, was sent out in October, 1825:<sup>1</sup>

*October, 1825.*

For some time past we have had it in contemplation to establish a house in New York, with the view of promoting the interest of Messrs. William & James Brown & Co., of *Liverpool*, and of affording greater facility, and the choice of markets, to our southern friends who are disposed to give them or us their business; for that purpose, our James Brown has established himself at New York, to conduct a Commission Business, under the firm of Brown Brothers & Co.

The partners in that house, are the same as those composing our respective firms.

ALEXANDER BROWN & SONS, *Baltimore.*

JOHN A. BROWN & Co., *Philadelphia.*

NEW YORK, 31st *October, 1825.*

In announcing our establishment, allow us to offer you our services. Should you send us cotton or other produce, we will either dispose of

<sup>1</sup> A reproduction in fac-simile is given elsewhere.

it in this market, or re-ship it to our Liverpool house, Messrs. William & James Brown & Co., as you may direct.

If a sale is made here, we charge a commission of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent; and if we guarantee, the customary charge will be made. Should the property be re-shipped to our friends, Messrs. Wm. & James Brown & Co., no charge will be made for our agency.

We are willing, at all times, to make reasonable advances on property consigned to us, or our Liverpool house, on receiving Invoice, Bills of Lading, and orders to have Insurance effected, either here or at Liverpool; and to reimburse ourselves for any advances we make, and expenses incurred on shipments to Messrs. William & James Brown & Co., we will draw on them, for which we charge a Commission of 1 per cent., but make no charge for effecting Insurance on property consigned to any of our establishments.

Your obedient servants,

(Signed) BROWN BROTHERS & Co.

#### REFERENCES

Benjamin Story, Esq.	}	<i>New Orleans.</i>	
Joseph Fowler, Jun., Esq.			
Messrs. John Hagan & Co.	}	<i>Mobile.</i>	
Messrs. McLoskey & Hagan,			
Messrs. Adger & Black,			<i>Charleston.</i>
Messrs. John Cumming & Son,			<i>Savannah.</i>
Messrs. F. T. Mastin & Co.,			<i>Huntsville, Alabama.</i>

“The New York Daily Advertiser” of January 12, 1826, publishes the earliest advertisement of the opening of the firm which I have been able to find.<sup>1</sup> It runs as follows:

<sup>1</sup> I reproduce it elsewhere in its original form, with other advertisements published in the same paper on the same day, which are interesting for the marked contrast they present with the same class of advertisements at the present time. The bath referred to in the last of these advertisements is the public bath-house in Chambers Street. My eldest sister remembers that it was to this public establishment that my father used to take the children for their Saturday night bath.

192 BROWN BROTHERS AND COMPANY.

NOTICE.—The subscribers conducting business at Baltimore under the firm of *Alexander Brown and Sons*, and at Philadelphia under that of *John A. Brown & Co.* have established themselves in this city under the firm of BROWN BROTHERS & Co. New York, January 11th, 1826.

ALEX' B BROWN } of Baltimore  
GEORGE BROWN }  
JOHN A. BROWN of Philadelphia  
JAMES BROWN of New York

The period during which the New York office was opened was one of great financial distress both in the United States and in England. The condition of business at the time is vividly brought before us by extracts from letters written by Brown Brothers & Company to their correspondents in the South. These extracts are also interesting because they show the conservative views of the members of the firm and their willingness to wait until they had firmly established their credit before launching out into large ventures. Thus they write to Benjamin Story, of New Orleans, under date of December 9, 1825:

We think our establishment could never have been made at a better time than now, as we are not involved or interested in a pecuniary point of view in the disasters that have occurred here, and notwithstanding the losses at Liverpool on loan to Low & Co. and some over-advances from Charleston, the capital of our concern will be as great or greater the first of January, 1826, than it was Jan. 1, 1825. We consider ourselves fortunate at such a result for so disastrous a year. When the storm subsides here we shall be, indeed we are now, prepared to embrace any good safe business that offers. . . . We are now only spectators.

Eight days later they write to the same correspondent: "In the sale of bills we question whether we shall be able

W. ... Albany, March 16, 1825

**CITY BATH.**

THE new Bath, in Chamber-street, (with accommodation of Ladies and Gentlemen,) opposite to the Institution, and adjoining to Seay's Bank, being finished, will be opened on Saturday, the 18th inst. The subscribers invite the attention, and solicit the patronage of the public to their new Establishment, which, they trust, will be so conducted as to merit their approbation, and add to New-York another improvement, important to health and comfort. An establishment of this kind, on a liberal scale, has long been wanted in our city, for the accommodation of our citizens, and especially for strangers and travellers. The Bathing apartments, are large, well ventilated, and supplied with every requisite convenience.

The Ladies' Batharoom is wholly private, having a separate entrance, with furnished parlours for their accommodations during the time of preparing the Baths.

For the Gentlemen, there is a reception room, and also apartments for refreshments. The subscribers promise their best efforts to give satisfaction to their customers. When some further improvements, which are in forwardness, are completed, their Establishment will comprise Hot and Cold Bathing in all varieties, with Shower and Vapour Baths; and also Sulphur, Medicinal and Harrowgate Water Baths.

The benefits of warm bathing to invalids are too well known and acknowledged to require any more than to say they are offered to the public at this Establishment.

\*20 If      **ANTHONY MORRIS**  
LITHOGRAPHIC OFFICE, 116 Nassau

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**NOTICE** - The subscribers, now trading business at Baltimore under the firm of *Alexander Brown and Sons*, and at Philadelphia under that of *John A. Brown & Co.* have established themselves in this city under the firm of **BROWN, BROTHERS & CO.** New-York, January 11th, 1826

ALEX'R BROWN,      of Baltimore.  
GEORGE BROWN,      of Philadelphia.  
JOHN A. BROWN,      of New-York.  
JAMES BROWN,      of New-York.

**RICE** - 26 tierces good quality for sale by **JOHN STEVENS, 32 Barclay st.**

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**COUNTRY SEAT WANTED.**  
Wanted to purchase or hire for a term of years, a country seat in good repair, with from 5 to 10 acres of land, not more than 3 miles from the City Hall. A situation on the North or East River would be preferred. A line addressed to E. C. J. and sent at this office, will be attended to. J121

TO LET (Law),

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**SURGEON DENTIST.**  
**SKINNER**, who has for many years practiced in remedying diseased teeth and setting artificial ones in as handsome and permanent a manner as the art will admit of, tenders his services to the Ladies and Gentlemen of New-York, at his Office, No. 3 Courtland-street, or at their own residence if required. New-York, Dec 21      1m\*

**IRON WORKS FOR SALE.**  
THE MURPHY IRON WORKS

Original Advertisement of Brown Brothers & Company, and Other Advertisements of the Period

WFOU

to do so well for our friends here for a while as J. A. B. & Co. It will take time to make us known here and we shall consult the interest of our friends and our own standing by not pressing our names on the market further than it will command top price. That need not prevent you, however, drawing on us, when you have any advantage by it, as the funds can always be sent from Philadelphia in some way when required. It may be well, however, not to draw on us at shorter than thirty days' sight. When we get fairly under way and have plenty of Bills Receivable it will make no difference at what sight we may be drawn on, but at our commencement we wish to move easily."

On January 19 of the following year they write as follows:

We have seen a very intelligent letter dated at London early in Dec. on the state of the money market there. It commenced by remarking that the public papers had no doubt reached this country, stating a disagreement between the Bank Directors and the Government, not one word of which was true, that there was a perfect understanding, and that the Bank never were more liberal in their Discounts to *business men* but set their faces against all *loan contractors, stock jobbers, Mining Speculators, Bill Brokers* (who borrow all they can from the Bank, to lend again at higher Interest) and all such, that business men on business paper could get all they wanted, but where a loan contractor, stock jobber &c &c were payers, it was thrown out no matter how good the endorsers. There are of course exceptions but this [is] the general feeling & course pursued, & the noise you see is made by those inconvenienced, which will affect business no further than the effect such a course may have on the price of produce, for those thrown out of Bank if able must raise the means through some other course. The letter we saw seemed to think matters would not ease off until March & if so we may look for some more failures on the other side.

Here money continues scarce. This arises more, however, from want of confidence in private securities than anything else, as money can be had here on U. S. Bank or U. S. Stock securities at 6 per cent. for short or long periods from individuals who seem afraid of anything else. We have no further failures to notice here but are of opinion that money matters won't get easy here nor confidence restored until spring.

On the same day and to the same correspondent they write as follows, commenting on some reports detrimental to the Liverpool house, which had been circulated from some unfriendly quarter:

We cannot but hope with you that those not interested in our welfare would just let us alone. It would seem however that our L'pool house, not only sustaining itself, but, we don't hesitate to say, being more easy in their monied concerns than any other house at L'pool in the American trade, excites the envy and jealousy of their competitors, some of whom, or their satellites with you, keep up the ferment by one idle report after another; but the most idle, being without one shadow of foundation, is their connexion and suffering by S. Williams, with whom they never had an account, & when he failed held but £3500 of his acceptances remitted from Phila and Baltimore for the credit of the houses remitting them. £2000 we advised you were drawn by Howland here and were replaced by our bill here on W. & J. B. & Co. for which we got paid out of the money rec'd from Howland. The others were drawn by Wm. Patterson & Sons of Baltimore and paid by W. & J. B. & Co. together with all Bills on that house on S. W. for the honour of Messrs. Pattersons with the knowledge of whose safety W. B. was perfectly familiar and the necessary reimbursements with acknowledgments for their interference have long since gone forward. Besides this they took up Eyre & Masseys Bills of Phila. on S. Williams. The amount however we believe was not large, but whatever it was, has been remitted.

Our last dates advise that W. & J. B. & Co. had £120,000 in Joseph Denison & Co.'s hands and their payments in Dec. only £60,000.

Besides that they hold 2500 shares of U. S. Bank Stock worth at par £56,000 and Denison's confidence is such & was such through the most precarious times of the past year that they offered to let them overdraw their acct without any security £50,000.

It is very gratifying to us that such confidence was continued to them but equally, indeed more so, that it was never used.

Some three weeks later they write, under date of February 11, 1826:

The public papers shew the state of the money market in England from the numerous failures of Banks, but we have the most satisfactory accounts from W. & J. B. & Co. of Denison's standing. Frodsham has been up in London and found there was no name stood higher at the Bank of England and [that] through all the difficulties [Denison's,] had asked but one discount from them. It is no small satisfaction to us as well as to W. & J. B. & Co. to see them through such a crisis. They have nothing to say to loans, mining companies, etc. In such a state of things we thought that W. & J. B. & Co. must make some bad debts, but up to 27th December, our latest date, they had not made one, and they write us that every bale of cotton under their control is sold, including Low's purchase, excepting New cottons just arriving. We are glad of this as we cannot think prices will be any better and it leaves their hands free and light for new arrivals. We have had some failures here (New York) this week, among others that of G. R. Waite, Lottery Office.

To Reynolds, Byrne & Co. of New Orleans, they write, May 19, 1826:

We have now Liverpool accounts to 20th April. They remark: "Our market is if possible in a worse state than represented in our last. We never remember to have seen a period of such complete stagnation in business. Though money has become plentiful in London (comparatively so) there is no revival in the demand for produce. Cotton is decidedly lower and the chief sales of Uplands are 6¼ to 6½."



On May 26, 1826, they write to Benjamin Story:

Money is not scarce *here on good security* but on anything doubtful it is very difficult to raise money. Those in the country trade are suffering severely, produce of all kinds is so low. Farmers and country storekeepers cannot pay their debts. Its a most fortunate thing for this country that the mercantile distress in England prevented the usual supplies of goods coming out, as we cannot see how the payments would have [been] made without such a drain of specie as would be ruinous.

To the same correspondent, under date of June 6, 1826, they write as follows:

Our letter from W. & J. B. & Co. of April 28th says, "We think everything looks worse today than heretofore, if possible. The accounts from Manchester are extremely gloomy; the streets are full of the unemployed manufacturers and symptoms of riot are but too evident. The military are all on the alert and much alarm is felt. In the neighborhood of Bary several Cotton Mills have been attacked and the power looms in them destroyed by the populace. The Military were obliged to interfere and several lives have been lost. We do not apprehend that these riots will be permitted to extend, as the Government will no doubt take immediate steps to put a stop to them, and if possible to devise some means for the relief of the sufferers, but this state of things has of course a sensible effect on our market and prices may in consequence still further decline."

Three days later, in a letter dated June 9, 1826, we catch the note of reviving prosperity: "Money plenty on good security. The Banks are beginning to complain for want of good business paper."

The care taken by the firm to keep their clients posted about the style and make-up of goods likely to sell in this market appears from the following extract from a letter

dated June 30, 1826, to their friends in Ireland, Messrs. William Gihon & Sons. They write:

The goods of the latter vessels (*Bolivar, Manhattan & Silas Richards*), we have received in good order and hope shortly to be able to advise progressing in sales with them, when you will observe particularly which stile [style] gets the preference which will be a guide to you in future for making up your goods. We like the finish of those last goods, but don't think they look . . . so well in the green papers as in any other Colour and we are pretty sure the others will get the preference. As this is our dull season we have but little to advise this time in the way of sales.

In answer to some criticisms on the result of some sales of goods at auction they write to the same correspondents:

21 Oct. 1826.

Your Mr. John Gihon knows how the auction business is conducted here and to him we must refer for particulars. He knows we never can tell exactly what goods will bring. Sometimes some Packages bring more than we ask at private sales and some less, but if they make a fair average of what we would ask or sell at, at private sale, we are satisfied. Mr. Nicholson always attends the auctions and sees our goods, and can buy in occasionally when he sees they are going too low but it would not do to practice it too often. The other day he bought in No. 843 at 31 cts. but it costs 2 prct. in State duty and other charges to do so. At the very same sale No. 202 costing 18d brought 56½ and No. 201 costing nearly the same only brought 40 cts., for which there is no accounting, but altho present he thought it would not be your instt. to buy them in. From the tenor of your letter in [the] Spring you expressed yourselves anxious that we should sell off the old goods before the new cheap goods should come to interfere with them. We tried to do so at private sale & did all we could in that way & from time to time as we thought most for your interest sold a few of them through the auctions. You seem to think the sale of 5

Aug. was a sacrifice. All we can say in reply is that the goods would not at any period since then have brot more and by selling them interest of money has been saved and we considered we were doing so in compliance with your wishes and on as good terms as we should probably be able to get this season and if held longer they would have been more out of condition.

In October, 1825, Messrs. Brown Brothers & Company made an arrangement with Mr. Samuel Nicholson to conduct a commission business in New York under the firm name of Samuel Nicholson & Company. In announcing the arrangement to their Irish correspondents, Messrs. William Gihon & Son, in a letter which bears the date of October 22, 1825, they thus describe the terms of the partnership: "We are his partners and have an oversight of the business, but it will be conducted principally, if not entirely, by himself. Our exchange business and money negotiations will be conducted by your friends, Brown Brothers & Company." Some time later, how soon I have not been able to ascertain, Mr. Nicholson became a general partner in the firm.

It has been already stated that in the summer of 1826 Mr. Brown was joined by his cousin, Stewart Brown of Baltimore, who became his partner in 1827. Stewart Brown had received his training in the Baltimore house, entering as a lad in 1815, and, as was usual in those days, sweeping out the office and lighting the fire. He was thoroughly familiar with the business of the firm, and from the start was of great assistance to James Brown in this new venture.

Both Stewart Brown and Mr. Nicholson appear at first to have been interested only in the business conducted in



**Mr. Samuel Nicholson**

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New York. Their compensation was a percentage on the business and they did not share in the general profits. This arrangement continued until 1836, when, after the death of Alexander Brown and the settlement of his estate, a new arrangement seems to have been made, and both Mr. Nicholson and Mr. Stewart Brown became partners in the Baltimore and Philadelphia houses as well, and, in 1838, partners also in the Liverpool house. Thereafter they were partners in all the concerns except the Baltimore house, which, as already stated, became an independent firm in 1839.

## CHAPTER XII

### NEW YORK—*Continued*

1837-1860. BROWN BROTHERS & COMPANY. THE PANIC OF 1837. THE REMOVAL OF BROWN BROTHERS & COMPANY TO 59 WALL STREET. THE MONROE EDWARDS CASE. THE PANIC OF 1857.

**I**N a previous chapter mention was made of the anxious days of 1837 and 1838. An interesting side-light on the condition of affairs on the American side of the water is given in the following letter of James Brown to his brother William. Under date of April 14, 1838, he writes from New York: "When Nicholson comes from N. O. we shall see what his views are as to future arrangements, but I am opposed to a permanent house there or anywhere else that will increase our business. We have enough to do now and more than I want, and any increase, come from what quarter it may, the actual and thinking labour is thrown here and it will wear us out. I have been a slave this winter, but felt it my duty to stick to it until we can get things reinstated, but I am not willing to tug at it as I have done, and I know none of you wish it. There is so little to do at Balto., it is easy for George to sit in his arm-chair and talk of new houses."

The report which Mr. Nicholson brought back from New Orleans on his return seems to have modified Mr. James Brown's views, for it appears that as a result of

that visit an agency of the firm was established there in 1838 under the name of Samuel Nicholson. Mr. Nicholson spent the winters in New Orleans until 1850, when he returned to New York, thereafter making only occasional visits to the South until he retired from the firm in 1856.

Writing again to his brother William on May 7th, 1838, on the subject of cotton combinations, Mr. Brown says: "I am sure you are right to resist [them]. Keep free to act as you deem right, and act as you are doing, withdrawing or selling lightly on a dull heavy market. We are quite sure a combination will result as you point out, and as was the case in 1825 those who held were caught and the sellers got out with comparatively little loss. . . . We are sure you are right in keeping yourselves free, letting others act as they like. I send several letters from Alexander,<sup>1</sup> who was at Mobile on the 30th ulto., but was to leave the next day for Montgomery on his way here."

It was about this time also, possibly a little earlier, that the New York house changed its bank account from the Bank of the Manhattan Company to the Merchants' Bank. Mr. Brown, it appears, became a director of the Manhattan Company soon after his establishment in New York, and the first account of the firm was kept there, but owing to a difference of opinion between Mr. Brown and the officers of the bank he resigned the directorship, and transferred the account to the Merchants' Bank, with which one of the firm's bank accounts has remained to the present time.

A short time after James Brown's settlement in New

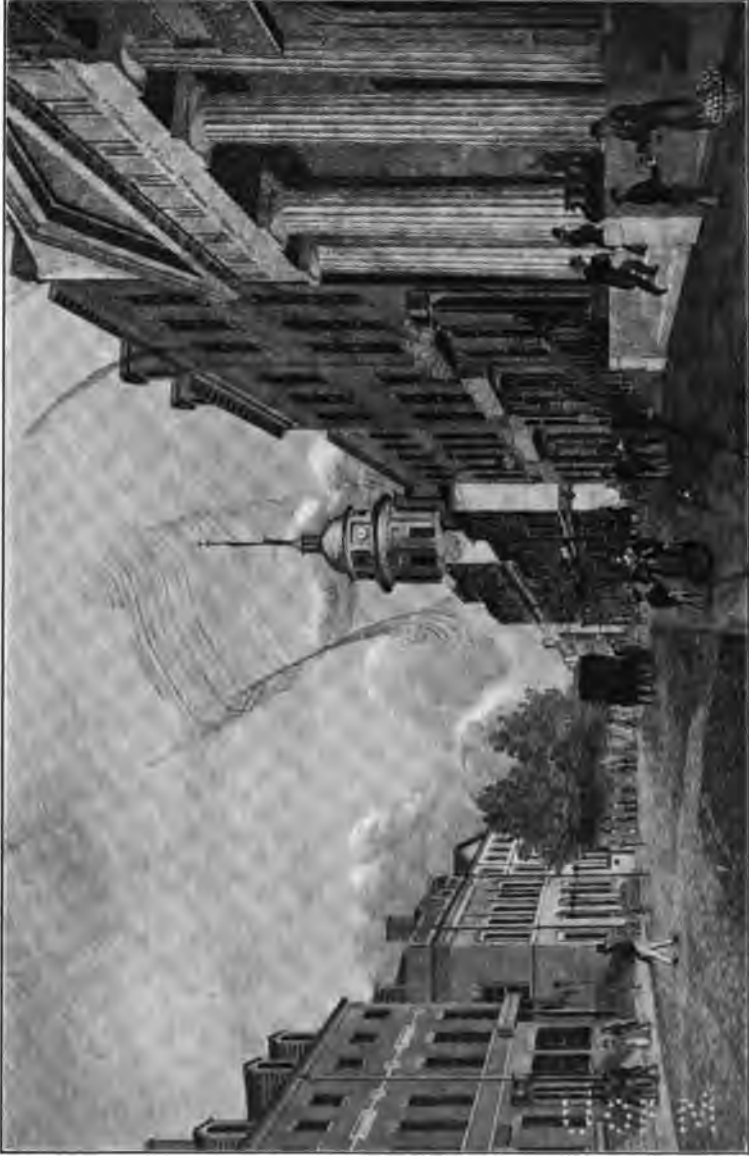
<sup>1</sup> William Brown's son Alexander was then travelling in the United States.



York, the foreign exchange and credit business of the firm became so important, and required so much time and special attention, that the dry goods part of their business was sold in 1833 to Amory, Leeds & Company, who remained in the old quarters in Pine Street. Brown Brothers & Company then moved into Wall Street and rented an office at No. 59, corner of Wall and Hanover Streets, then known as the Joseph Building. This building was afterward purchased, either by James Brown or his brother in England, and from that day to this the firm has occupied the same corner.

In December, 1835, occurred the great fire which destroyed a large section of the lower part of the city. A large portion of the south side of Wall Street from Hanover Street toward the river was burned, but Nos. 51, 53, 55, 57, 59 and 61, including the premises occupied by Brown Brothers & Company, were saved. The night was intensely cold with a high wind, and the water drawn from the river froze in the pipes. The fire was finally arrested by blowing up buildings with powder procured from the Navy-yard.

After the retirement of John A. Brown in 1837, and George Brown at the end of 1839, the business of the firm and its policy were controlled by the two remaining brothers, the eldest, William, in Liverpool, and the youngest, James, in New York. Communication between the Old and New Worlds in those days was slow and infrequent. From 1825 to 1840 there were regular lines of packet-ships between New York and Liverpool—many of them noted for their excellent sailing qualities—but it was impossible to count upon either the arrival or departure of these ves-



Wall Street before the Fire of 1835

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sels with any great regularity.<sup>1</sup> There were some notably quick passages, and I remember my father's statement that he once made the voyage from New York to Cape Clear, off the south coast of Ireland, in eleven days, but it took him six days after that to beat up the Channel against a head wind. The first steamer that carried a regular mail between Great Britain and the United States was the Cunard steamship *Britannia*. She sailed from Liverpool for Boston for the first time July 4, 1840, with sixty-three passengers. The passage occupied fourteen days and eight hours. She was a wooden paddle steamer of 1,154 tons, 207 feet in length, of 740 horse-power, and her average

<sup>1</sup> I reproduce from the "New York Daily Advertiser" of January 12, 1826, the advertisements of the old and the new lines of Liverpool packets:

#### OLD LINE OF LIVERPOOL PACKETS

To sail on the 1st and 16th of every month.

#### SHIP *MANCHESTER*

Wm. Lee, Jr. master, to sail 16th of 1st month, January. The Liverpool Packets having met with general approbation and support, the owners of them have concluded to add to the number of vessels employed in that establishment; and they now intend that the following ships shall sail between New York and Liverpool, in regular succession, twice in each month from each port, leaving both New York and Liverpool on the 1st and 16th of *every month* thro'out the year, viz.:

Ships	Masters
<i>New York</i>	Thomas Bennett
<i>Columbia</i>	Hugh Graham
<i>Manchester</i>	Wm. Lee, Jr.
<i>William Thompson</i>	R. R. Crocker
<i>Florida</i>	Jos. Tinkham
<i>Canada</i>	James Rogers
<i>James Cropper</i>	C. H. Marshall

These ships were all built in New York, of the best materials, and are coppered and copper fastened. They are very fast sailers; their accommodations for pas-

speed was 8.5 knots. She had accommodations for one hundred and fifteen passengers, all of whom were first cabin. For many years after the establishment of the regular fortnightly service by the Cunard line, the average passage was fourteen days.

In the early days almost all large transactions of the firm were settled on 'Change, which met about the middle of the day at the old Merchants' Exchange<sup>1</sup> in Wall Street on the site of the former Custom-house.<sup>2</sup> There merchants and bankers met, made their purchases and sales of exchange, and often arranged their credits for the sea-

sengers are uncommonly extensive and commodious, and they are commanded by men of great experience.

The price of passage to England in the cabin is now fixed at 30 guineas, for which sum passengers will be furnished with Beds and Bedding, Wine and Stores of the best quality. For further particulars, apply to,

ISAAC WRIGHT & SON,  
FRANCIS THOMPSON,  
BENJAMIN MARSHALL, OF  
JEREMIAH THOMPSON.

#### NEW LINE OF LIVERPOOL PACKETS

The ship *Wm. Byrnes*, Wm. G. Hackstaff, master, to sail 24th of 1st month—January.

The ship *John Wells*, Isaac Harris, master, to sail 24th of 2nd month—February.

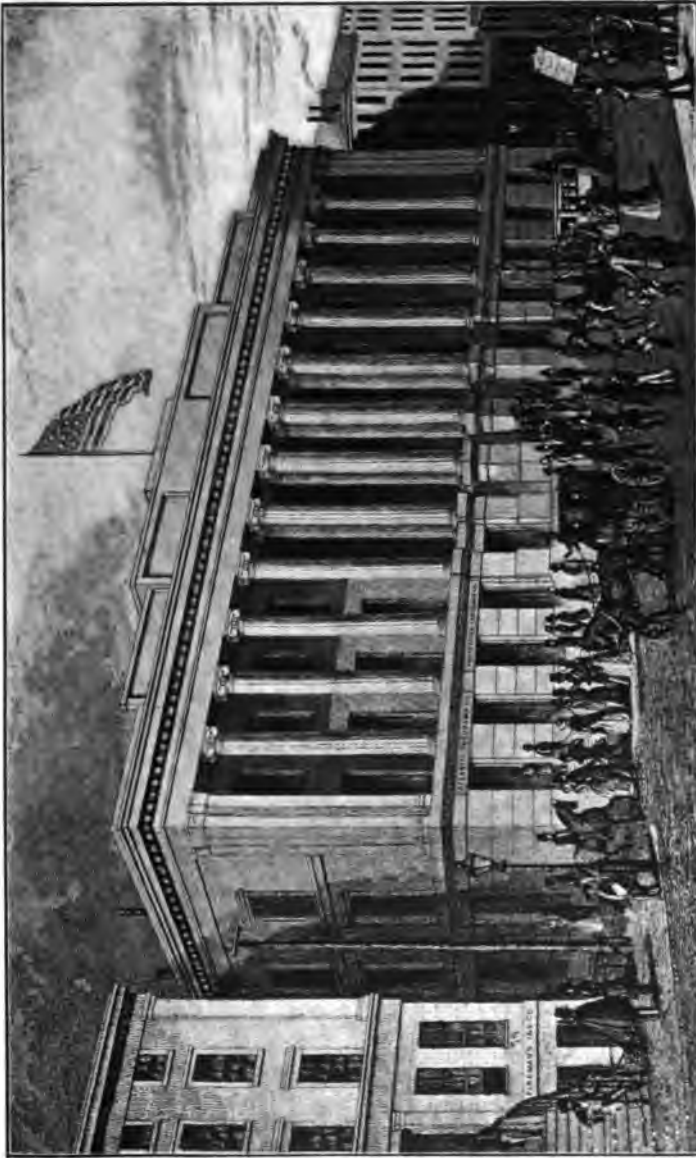
The ship *Manhattan*, Fred. W. Marshall, master, to sail 24th of 3rd month—March.

The owners of the above ships intend one of them shall sail from this port on the 24th, and from Liverpool on the 8th of each month. These ships are all of the first class—are coppered, and have convenient cabins, well furnished with Beds, Bedding, and Stores of the first qualities. They are ably commanded, and insurance can be effected on them at the lowest rates. For freight or passage (which in the cabin is 30 guineas) apply to

BYRNES, TRIMBLE & Co.,  
159 South Street.

<sup>1</sup> The building was destroyed by fire in 1835.

<sup>2</sup> This refers to the Custom-house in Wall Street, removed in 1908 to Bowling Green.



The Old Custom House—Showing Brown Brothers & Company to the Left

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son's importations. Except on packet or steamer days there was little work for the partners after the Exchange closed at one o'clock. The usual dinner-hour in New York, as late as the fifties, was three or half-past three o'clock, and except on "packet nights" (and later "steamer days") merchants and bankers had leisure afternoons to spend with their families and in public service.

With the establishment of the Cunard line of steamers in 1840, and still more of the Collins line in 1850, the character of international business gradually changed. James Brown was largely interested in the latter line, and their vessels were consigned in Liverpool to Brown, Shipley & Company. The steamers of the Collins line<sup>1</sup> were the first ocean steamships built without any bowsprit or over-arching stem, and on the arrival of the first steamer of the line in Liverpool its appearance excited the derision of the seafaring population there. But the principle then adopted has been followed in all modern steamers.

Although the Collins line did not prove a commercial success, it materially affected the character of transatlantic commerce and travel. It was the first line to introduce the modern improvements which have made ocean travelling in recent years so much more comfortable. Its vessels were provided with barber-shops, an essential for the convenience of American travellers, bath-rooms, a ladies' cabin, and other arrangements for the comfort of the passengers. These changes were adopted by other lines with the result that what was once considered a luxury has come to be regarded as a commonplace. From that day to this

<sup>1</sup> In 1848, before the vessels were built, a contract was executed with the United States government for carrying the mail.



the growth of foreign trade and travel has been steady. Many new lines have been started, the time of the ocean passage has been shortened and the frequency and regularity of the mail service has been constantly improved.

As an instance of the friendly relations between the firm (whose senior partner was then largely interested in the Collins line) and the Cunard line (whose owners in Liverpool were friends of the Liverpool house), the following incident deserves mention: When one of the steamships of the Cunard line was seized by the United States customs officers, because of an accusation of smuggling brought against some of her crew, a bond was demanded to the extent of £30,000 sterling. The requisite bond had to be given by a citizen of the United States, and was furnished by Brown Brothers & Company in New York at the request of their Liverpool house; and for many years thereafter one of the partners of Brown Brothers & Company acted as bondsman for the Cunard line whenever occasion demanded.

In the summer of 1841, Brown Brothers & Company, as well as the agent of an English firm, Edward A. Corrie, Jr., were the victims of one of the most clever forgeries ever perpetrated in the city. The culprit, one Monroe Edwards by name, was a member of a prominent Kentucky family, where his father occupied some of the highest offices in the gift of the people.<sup>1</sup> The trial attracted great

<sup>1</sup> In early life Edwards was apprenticed to a gentleman in New York with whom he subsequently emigrated to Texas. He seems to have made a good deal of money by buying slaves in Havana at from \$135 to \$220 a head and selling them in Texas for from \$800 to \$1,000 apiece; but in one of his ventures he quarrelled with his partner in the business, who accused him of cheating and threatened a suit for the recovery of the money due him. Edwards thereupon suddenly left Texas and proceeded via New Orleans to Baltimore and thence to England, where

No 5264 **Exch.** for £ 24 - 15 - 0

New-York 12<sup>th</sup> June 1835

Sixty days after Sight of this **SECOND**  
of Exchanges (Not and Hand of the same tenor and date unpaid,) pay to the Order of  
Messrs Creech  
Twenty four pounds as fifteen Months standing  
in London

BROWN, BROTHERS & CO.

Value received which places to account of

To

Messrs Wm. & James Brown & Co. }  
LIVERPOOL

Your obedient Servants,

Thos. Mathus & Co

WFOU

attention at the time because of the distinguished appearance and social position of the defendant, the eminent counsel engaged and the general impression of his innocence.

The plot began with a letter written on the 9th of July from Philadelphia by one H. S. Hill to Maunsell, White & Co.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hill represented himself and his brother as proprietors of a large cotton plantation in Arkansas, who were anxious to make arrangements in New Orleans for the agency of their estate, which he said was producing from 800 to 1,000 bales. He stated that they would not require advances until the first crop was in hand and then

he assumed the title of colonel. While in England he seems to have received some social recognition as a rich Southern planter. He returned to New York in 1838, and then heard for the first time of the suits brought against him by his late partner, and the attachment of his plantation and negroes in the South. After this he appears to have lived by his wits, and several forgeries of which the perpetrators were never discovered were attributed to him.

<sup>1</sup> MAUNSELL, WHITE & Co.—

PHILA., 9th July, 1841.

*Gentlemen:*—My Brother & self having lately become proprietors of a large Cotton Estate in Phillips City, Arkansas, are anxious of forming our arrangements in your City for the agency of the same. Our friend Mr. Gray of Richmond has recommended your House to us as one in every way calculated to protect our interest, & I therefore write with the view to know if you will take the agency of sd plantation. It is now producing from 800 to 1000 Bales & we contemplate increasing the number of Negroes. We shall not want any advances until our first crop is in hand, nor shall we then require any advance beyond what is usual for the plantation supplies &c. We have been told that probably one of your House will be on North this summer; if so we should like to see him in person and will be glad to be informed of his whereabouts.

We know nothing of cotton planting ourselves but intend to send out a competent manager. We also wish to send out an Engine and several approved agricultural implements from New York, and we shall be obliged if you will send us the address of your New York correspondent, through whom we will order the articles we want. Your early attention to this letter will greatly oblige Gentlemen

Yr. Obt. Servt.

H. S. HILL.

P. S.—Direct to me at the Exchange Hotel, Baltimore. Addressed Messrs. Maunsell, White & Co. Merchants, New Orleans, La.

only in moderate amounts. He said that his friend, Mr. Gray, of Richmond, had recommended Maunsell, White & Company as in every way calculated to protect their interest. It is evident from the letter that the writer was familiar with business matters and correspondence in New Orleans and had ascertained that Mr. Gray was also a friend of Maunsell, White & Company. On the 24th of July, Maunsell, White & Company replied,<sup>1</sup> expressing their pleasure at opening the account, and stating that one of their firm would soon be visiting the north and have much pleasure in calling upon Mr. Hill, who then disappeared. There was no further communication between him and Maunsell, White & Company, but he had

NEW ORLEANS, July 24th, 1841.

<sup>1</sup> H. S. HILL, ESQ., BALTIMORE:

*Sir:* Your much respected favor of 9th instant, from Philadelphia, is at hand, stating that you and your brother had lately become proprietors of a large cotton estate in Phillips county, Arkansas, and are desirous of forming an engagement in this city for the agency of the same, and that you will not want any advance until your first crop is in hand, nor even then, beyond what is usual for plantation supplies.

We feel much gratified at the confidence you repose in us, by offering us the agency through the recommendation of our friend Mr. Gray, of Richmond, and you may rely upon our best exertions for your interest.

The terms you propose to us, of not requiring any advance, in anticipation of your crops being in hands, is exactly the kind of business we like to do, and we will cheerfully accept of it on those terms. One of our firm (C. Bullitt) is at present in Louisville, Ky., and may remain in the neighborhood for some months. We don't know if it is his intention to go north, but should he do so, it will afford him much pleasure to become personally acquainted with you. We have no particular correspondent in New York, though we have no doubt our firm is well known there, and should you purchase any articles to be consigned to our care you will find no difficulty in shipping them, through the house of Brown Brothers & Co., or Prime, Ward and King, or Joshua Clibborn; and many others equally good. At present there is little or no business doing in our city, and we have only to refer you to the Price Current annexed, for the present state of our market. With much respect,  
We remain your obedient servants,  
MAUNSELL, WHITE & Co.

secured what he most needed, one of their business letters with the signature of the firm.

The next step in the plot was the receipt by Brown Brothers & Company of a letter dated New Orleans, August 10th, 1841, and apparently from Maunsell, White & Company, in which they said "they had taken leave to send a letter of introduction to a friend of theirs, Mr. John P. Caldwell, now on a visit to Virginia, who wished to secure from \$20,000 to \$30,000 as an advance on 1,011 bales of cotton in their hands." Mr. Caldwell was described as one of the few planters in the State who were free from debt, and a solvent and very wealthy gentleman. This letter <sup>1</sup> was received on the 23d of August, in the

NEW ORLEANS, 10th Aug., 1841.

<sup>1</sup> MESSRS. BROWN BROTHERS & Co., NEW YORK.

*Gentlemen:* Our friend Mr. John P. Caldwell, now on a visit to Virginia, writes us "that he wishes to command 25 or 30 thousand dollars." As the best means of meeting our friend's wishes, we have taken leave to enclose him a letter of introduction to you, with a request that you afford him the facilities he requires, provided you find it convenient, safe and profitable to yourselves. Mr. Caldwell has in our hand (subject to no charges) one thousand and eleven—1,011 bales of cotton, weighing 465,060 lbs., quality averaging "good fair" and worth in the market, at present prices, at least fifty thousand dollars. This cotton arrived late in the city, and by our advice has been held to sell with the new crop just coming in.

Mr. Caldwell and his family are among the very few planters of this state who are entirely free from debt, and he is a solvent and very wealthy gentleman. The cotton in our hands constitutes the last year's crop, both of Mr. C. and his mother, and the whole of it is subject to his orders; therefore any arrangements he may make predicated on the cotton in our hands, will be perfectly safe.

If Mr. Caldwell can do no better, he is authorized to value on our house for any sum not exceeding thirty thousand dollars, (at not less than thirty days' sight) and his bills shall be duly honored and protected. Should Mr. Caldwell conclude on this course, we shall feel greatly obliged to you if you will procure the negotiation of any bills drawn on our house by him to the above amount.

We shall also be thankful for any attention shown our friend during his stay in your city. With much respect, we remain

Your obedient servants,

MAUNSELL, WHITE & Co.

ordinary course of business, and failed to excite the slightest suspicion of its genuineness. A little later Brown Brothers & Company received a letter from Mr. Caldwell, dated Alexandria, August 25th, 1841, mentioning the receipt of a letter of introduction from Maunsell, White & Company, and stating that owing to the dangerous illness of his young brother he was prevented from presenting it in person.<sup>1</sup> He enclosed bills of exchange on Maunsell, White & Company for \$30,000, against cot-

ALEXANDRIA, D. C., Aug. 25, 1841.

<sup>1</sup> SIR,—I am in receipt of a letter dated 10th inst. from Messrs. Maunsell, White & Co., of New Orleans, enclosing a letter of introduction to you, and in which I am informed they have written you to advance me the funds I want on the security of the cotton in their hands, or to get my bills upon them discounted to the amount of *thirty thousand dollars*. I should come on in person to New York, but am prevented from doing so by the dangerous illness of my young brother, who is with me in this neighborhood, and is now lying in a very precarious situation, so ill, indeed, that I cannot leave him for a single day. Thus circumstanced, I herewith hand you my bills of exchange on Messrs. White & Co. for \$26,000 at 30 and 60 days sight, which you will please get discounted at the best rate, and forward the proceeds to me to this place in a bill, or bills upon Richmond. If, however, it would be an object to have the cotton in the hands of Messrs. White & Co. shipped to your agency at Liverpool, that plan would suit me as well, having several times shipped our crops on our own account; and in order that you may avail of it if you like, I also hand you an order on Messrs. White & Co., to be used if you prefer, if you accept this proposition. I want \$25,000 advanced; the cotton can then be shipped, and when sold, the residue of the proceeds can be placed to my credit, and Messrs. White & Co. advised thereof. I want to buy some hands for our plantations here, and am very anxious to send them out immediately, as they may assist in gathering the new crop; 'tis therefore of vast importance to me to close this transaction at once. If suitable bills cannot be had on Richmond, they will answer on Baltimore or Washington, but Richmond would be preferred, as I want to use Virginia funds, and if sound bills cannot be had on either place, then a letter of credit directed to one of the Richmond banks from one of the New York banks, I presume will answer. Your early attention to the foregoing will confer on me a very great favor.

I am, gentlemen, respectfully your servant,  
BROWN BROTHERS & Co., NEW YORK.

JOHN P. CALDWELL.

ton in their hands, and asked to have them discounted at the best rates. Brown Brothers & Company replied on the 28th of August, 1841, enclosing, as requested, about \$24,000 in Baltimore and Richmond funds.<sup>1</sup> These bills were acknowledged by Caldwell from Fredericksburg, Va., on the 1st of September, and his letter stated that he had instructed Maunsell, White & Company to follow Brown Brothers & Company's directions in reference to the cotton.<sup>2</sup> It was not an easy matter for Caldwell to

NEW YORK, 28th August, 1841.

<sup>1</sup> JOHN P. CALDWELL, ESQ. ALEXANDRIA, D. C.

*Dear Sir:*—In acknowledgement of your favor 25th instant, we hasten to apprise you that we prefer making the advance you require upon your 1011 bales cotton, in the hands of Messrs. Maunsell, White & Co. of New Orleans, to negotiating at this time drafts on that place, and we shall therefore, direct said friends in conformity with your order, which we this day transmit to them, together with your bills on them for \$26,000 to ship your cotton to our Liverpool friends, Brown, Shipley and Co. giving us or them timely orders for insurance, and on receiving from them B lading for the shipment, we shall then value on Liverpool for the amount of our advance, being \$24,505 48-100—the cost of the enclosed funds amounting to \$25,119 52-100, as per annexed statement, which we hope will be satisfactory. We feel much indebted to Messrs. Maunsell, White and Co. for the pleasure of your correspondence—[*This produced roars of laughter in Court*]—but regret exceedingly the cause which prevents us from making your personal acquaintance, though we hope still to receive a visit from you on some later occasion. We would suggest your addressing our Liverpool friends through us, with your views as to the disposal of your cotton, and in mean time remain,

Yours respectfully,

BROWN BROTHERS & Co.

We regret we were able to get so few Virginia funds, but we have cleared the market both for these as well as for Baltimore funds—of the latter we could not get \$1000 more under 1½.

[Then follows a list of bills on various parties, at rates of discount ranging from 2 to 3½ per cent.]

FREDERICKSBURG, VA., 1st Sept. 1841.

<sup>2</sup> SIRS:—Your favor of the 28th ultimo came duly to hand, containing checks, &c. to the amount of \$25,119.52—Twenty-five thousand one hundred and nineteen 52-100 dollars Virginia and Baltimore funds. I was at Baltimore yesterday and am now on my way to Richmond to arrange my business there. My poor brother is still in a very precarious situation, and I can only leave him for a few hours at



collect the funds from the Baltimore banks, but his coolness and knowledge of ordinary business methods carried him safely through the ordeal. So successfully did he impose upon George Brown, of Alexander Brown & Sons, who had received advice of the transaction from the New York house, that he procured from him a quasi-identification which satisfied the banks upon which the bills were drawn. In an equally clever way he was able to hoodwink the parties in Richmond and secure the money there also. Brown Brothers & Company, of course, wrote at once to New Orleans enclosing Caldwell's order for the cotton, and received a reply from Maunsell, White & Company, dated New Orleans, September 7, pronouncing the whole matter a fraud, as they had no knowledge of John P. Caldwell, had never given a letter of introduction to any such person, and had not a single bale of cotton belonging to such a man.<sup>1</sup>

a time. The facilities you have afforded me will enable me to save several hundred bales of cotton, as we had planted very large crops that we could not have saved without this timely aid. I have written Messrs. White & Co. instructing them to promote your desire in regard to the cotton without delay.

Also in compliance with your suggestion I enclose a letter to your house at Liverpool in regard to the same, which you will please forward. I am respectfully,

Sirs, your obt. servt.

JNO. P. CALDWELL.

MESSRS. BROWN BROTHERS & Co., NEW YORK.

NEW ORLEANS, Sept. 7, 1841.

<sup>1</sup>MESSRS. BROWN BROTHERS & Co., NEW YORK.

*Gentlemen:*—We are this evening in receipt of your favor of the 28th ult., "*stating you were in receipt of our favor of the 10th inst., and were much obliged for our kind introduction to you of our friend John P. Caldwell, Esq.,*" whose two drafts for \$13,000 each you enclosed us, together with his letter to us, instructing the shipment of all the cotton subject to his order in our hands, i. e., one thousand and eleven bales to your house in Liverpool.

In reply, we are sorry to say that the whole business is a *fraud*—as we never wrote the letter of introduction alluded to—have no knowledge of who John P.

By what means suspicion was fastened upon Edwards I do not know, but a short account of his life, written by a sympathetic friend,<sup>1</sup> states that the clew which led to his arrest was furnished by two letters directed to Brown Brothers & Company in New York in a disguised hand, stating that "A. P." who had embarked at Boston for Liverpool was the person who had obtained the money.<sup>2</sup> As A. P. had but a short time before left Washington with the promise of being appointed the bearer of the commission of Mr. Everett as Minister to England (which appointment was later given to another person), he was expected to leave about the date of the receipt of the two anonymous letters. The supposition undoubtedly was that A. P. would have left Boston before any action could be taken in the matter and in the pursuit of him all trace

Caldwell, Esq. is—nor have we a single bale of cotton belonging to any man of that name in our possession.

We waited on your friend here, Mr. Benjamin Storey, and showed him your letter, with the three enclosures, at which he expressed much surprise, and suggested that we ought to have the drafts regularly protested for non-acceptance, and return them forthwith to you, which we now do, enclosed, and hope you may be enabled to apprehend the rascal, and recover from him the amount you advise having remitted him.

It appears a similar fraud was practised on our friend and correspondent, Joshua Clibborn, of New York, to whom a forged letter was addressed, introducing the same individual who wanted to negotiate through him about twenty-five to thirty thousand dollars. He very fortunately declined the business, as contrary to the express understanding of his partners at Antwerp on that head.

We hope to hear soon from you of your having recovered the money and counterfeiter. Very respectfully yours, MAUNSELL, WHITE & Co.

<sup>1</sup> "The Life of the Celebrated Monroe Edwards, Convicted in New York before the Court of Oyer and Terminer, June 6, 1842, for Forgery and Swindling to the Amount of Fifty Thousand Dollars." By a Texan. Boston, 1842.

<sup>2</sup> The first letter stated the fact positively. The second spoke somewhat doubtfully, and suggested that as A. P. was a man of good family and high connections, it would be well to proceed with caution in charging it upon him.

of the aggressor would be lost. Fortunately, A. P. had not left Boston and he was followed. His mental incapacity and total want of ability even to conceive, much less to carry through, such a fraud saved him from arrest, but under the excitement of the charge he declared Edwards to be the culprit, and made an affidavit to that effect, under which Edwards was arrested in Philadelphia. At the time of his arrest \$46,000 in money was found in his trunk.

Edwards's defence, which was ably conducted, was an attempt to account for the possession of the money by the production of a partnership agreement which he had recently entered into with a man named Johnson, by which the capital was to be \$250,000. Johnson was to put in \$50,000 cash and 250 negroes now in Martinique, and Edwards was to put in 50,000 acres of land, more or less, in Texas. The defence also attempted to prove that it was impossible for Edwards to have been in Richmond and Baltimore at the time the drafts were said to have been cashed, and the registers of several inns in other places were produced which contained the name of Edwards on those dates.

The identity of Caldwell with Edwards was, however, clearly established not only by the testimony of the persons who had cashed the drafts in Richmond and Baltimore, but by other parties, and among the names on the way-lists between Baltimore and Washington at about the dates when the money was paid appeared the names of both Edwards and Caldwell. Moreover, in the forged letters received by Brown Brothers & Company, ostensibly from Maunsell, White & Company, there were certain peculiarities of spelling which also appeared in gen-

uine letters of Edwards. These pieces of evidence together with the unsatisfactory answers of Johnson to a commission sent out to Havana to secure his testimony about the partnership were so convincing that after the judge's charge the jury found no difficulty in reaching a verdict of guilty.<sup>1</sup>

In 1847, James Brown invited his cousin James M. Brown, half-brother of Stewart Brown, who was then partner of a firm in Baltimore, to come to New York and join the firm. Mr. Brown accepted the invitation and continued as a partner of the New York house until his death, which occurred on July 19, 1890. In a letter written to his friend and agent, Thomas B. Curtis, in Boston, on August 12, 1847, James Brown thus describes James M. Brown:

We are going to lose our confidential man, Mr. Kickhoefer, who has been with us some thirteen or fourteen years. . . . Mr. K's place will be filled by James M. Brown, my cousin and our S. B's [Stewart Brown's] half-brother, who was brought up in our office at Baltimore, where he was ten or twelve years. He is now a partner with Seaver & Dunbar, but leaves them in October. He is a thor-

<sup>1</sup> In the trial Hon. J. J. Crittenden, the Hon. Tom Marshall, Robert Emmett and William Evarts represented Edwards. The prosecution was in the hands of the District Attorney, James R. Whiting, assisted by William M. Price, Ogden Hoffman and George F. Allen. Joseph R. Hart, counsel for the sheriff who made the arrest, also took part. The venerable ex-Chancellor Kent, with other eminent men, was present during many of the court sessions. Judge Kent presided at the trial, which lasted six days. The charge was forgery in the third degree, and the opening address was made by George F. Allen, a son-in-law of James Brown. In view of the time now occupied in securing a jury in important cases, it is interesting to note that this jury was secured in a single afternoon. Sixty witnesses were examined and counsel were two days in summing up. The Judge's charge occupied one hour and forty minutes, and the jury retired at six o'clock in the evening, returning a verdict of "Guilty" in the morning.

ough man of business, smart and intelligent, and I think after a little practice, as it is my purpose, if my brother William consent, to bring him [in], will suit us better than Mr. K., as a junior partner. This post I was in hopes my son James would have been able to take in a few years, but Providence has willed otherwise. We need someone here to whom we can intrust the signature of the House, and in whom we can repose entire confidence; as we brought James M. up from the stump we know all about him and his habits, which are unexceptional, and since I am disappointed in my son being spared to come in with us I am gratified at being able to bring in Stewart's brother.

Toward the close of the period covered by this chapter occurred the panic of 1857. Reference has already been made to this panic in Chapter VII, as far as it affected the Liverpool house. Interesting glimpses of the state of affairs in New York during this critical period appear from the following correspondence.

Under date of October 10, 1857, Mr. Shipley writes Mr. William Brown as follows:

MY DEAR SIR: WILMINGTON, DEL., 10 Oct. 1857.

I saw your brother, Mr. John A. Brown in Philadelphia yesterday, he having just come on from New York. . . .

It would be superfluous in me in my seclusion to attempt to give you information on the terrible state of things here, as you will of course be better informed by those engaged in what is actually passing. People compare it with 1837. The Panic now is probably greater than then, but as I think with much less reason, when we consider the far superior resources now of the interests concerned in proportion to the difficulties. Unreasoning panic prevails, the currency in a great measure annihilated, and neither produce nor mdze nor stocks nor real estate can be made available to pay debts,—hence banks and wealthy solvent merchants are prostrated, and the usual facilities of trade for getting produce to markets are suspended. This can continue but for a brief period. The substantial resources and energy of the country



**Mr. James Muncaster Brown**

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remain to surmount at no distant day the temporary effects of insane speculation and improvident and premature railroad works, &c., beyond the available capital and labour of the country for the time, stimulated as they were by the influx of gold, which new element kept off the consequences so long as to blind (as it appears to me) the community to the danger and to the lessons of experience.

JOSEPH SHIPLEY.

On the 16th of November, Mr. John A. Brown writes as follows to Mr. Shipley:

PHILAD'A, 16 Nov. 1857.

MY DEAR SIR:

I am in receipt of your note of 14th inst., with the enclosures. . . . I returned from New York on Saturday. I left all but my Br. James in good spirits. He is greatly annoyed at the large advances that are being made on account of the steamers. . . . As regards the Lpool house . . . Decem. was fully provided for by bills, and £50,000 into January by produce. I think myself that all will go well with the house, but a large sum will be lost by the steamers<sup>1</sup> and my Br. James is particularly annoyed and worried about it. . . . I believe my Br. James intends to father the total loss by the steamers, be that what it may.

Yours very truly,

JOHN A. BROWN.

MR. JOSEPH SHIPLEY, WILMINGTON.

On the 17th and 18th of November, the following exchange of letters took place between Mr. James Brown and Mr. Shipley:

NEW YORK, 17 Nov. '57.

JOS. SHIPLEY, ESQ.

*Dear Sir:* I return the letters herewith from Brother John. Seeing merchants, corporations and banks going by the board, and of the former those generally of the first standing, it was enough to alarm us. . . . Fortunately for us we had very few credits, not being confined to any one branch of business, and as all business interests were not

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the Collins line.



equally in trouble, our collections have on the whole resulted better than we feared. Our remittances cover all Decr. payments and £100,000 or more towards January and as our banks are discounting more paper now and 60 day bills are beginning to be asked for at New Orleans, Mr. Morrell has made a beginning by drawing about \$4,000. Whenever it is found that these will discount at bank, the demand will increase and we will thus be enabled to keep the house full handed with good bills. We have but £5,000 on — drawn by Bk. of Mobile which will be protected by Williams, Deacon & Co. The house holds besides £1,900 remitted on Boston  $\frac{3}{4}\%$  which we hope the endorsers can take up. This is the only disappointment in bills so far, and as our remittances are generally of the first class we apprehend no disappointments of moment if — stands and of this we have no fears. The advance we are under for the steamers annoys me more than the business matters. The *Adriatic* made a very successful trial trip and sails on Saturday. She is very fast and in usual times would make money. We must get along with them as well as we can. What a comfort to business men to have such a regulator as the Bank of England, and managed with such judgment! What a contrast to our Bank Managers here! The power for mischief is too tremendous to be placed in such incompetent hands, and how a remedy for the future is to be applied is the question. I was very glad to see your letter of 14th to Brother John written in your usual hand showing you were free from your enemy at present. May you long continue so is the sincere desire of

Yours truly,  
JAMES BROWN.

To this letter Mr. Shipley replied as follows:

ROOKWOOD, WILMINGTON, DEL., 18 Nov. '57.

JAMES BROWN, ESQ., NEW YORK.

*Dear Sir:* I am very happy indeed to learn from your favor of yesterday that you no longer feel cause of anxiety. . . . There has been quite enough to create alarm, and in the midst of the despondency around us here and the knowledge of grave elements of difficulty and danger existing abroad it was impossible to contemplate the possible effect in England of our great breakdown without serious

apprehension. Happily they were relieved most opportunely of dread as to the result of the India mutiny and they have given us credit for much greater vitality than we seemed to believe in, in ourselves.

It is astonishing how you have thus far escaped with so few protested sterling bills. From what I have heard of ——'s wealth, from pretty good authority, I should think there can be no doubt of his standing, tho' he will be very severely handled.

I have been exceedingly sorry to know that the affairs of the steamers have been such as to cause you great pain and annoyance. From what I have heard from your brother, Mr. J. A. B., I would infer that you have probably allowed it to exercise an undue impression on you, considering that the worst consequences attending them have, I suppose, arisen from causes and disasters which could not be foreseen or guarded against.

On the other hand there is the most abundant cause for congratulation that the House now sees its way safely out of the whirlpool with unimpaired credit and such means as must soon enable it to make up all losses, in the good and safe business which must follow such a crash as we have been passing through.

JOSEPH SHIPLEY.

## CHAPTER XIII

### NEW YORK—*Continued*

1860-1908. BROWN BROTHERS & COMPANY. THE CIVIL WAR. ERECTION OF THE PRESENT OFFICE BUILDING. DEATH OF JAMES BROWN.

**I**N Chapter VII an account was given of the difference of opinion between the English and American partners, caused by the Civil War, and of the policy which was finally adopted. In the present chapter it remains to consider more in detail the effects of the war upon the fortunes of the firm in New York.

After the election of Mr. Lincoln in November, 1860, the South became more and more restive and agitation for the dissolution of the Union spread from State to State. On December 20, 1860, amid great rejoicing, South Carolina passed its ordinance of secession, and similar action was taken by many other Southern States early in the following year. Mr. Lincoln, however, was peacefully inaugurated. The ceremony took place on the 4th of March, 1861, in the presence of a great concourse of people, among whom Senator Douglas was a conspicuous figure. In his inaugural address, Mr. Lincoln announced that he had no intention of interfering directly or indirectly with slavery in the States. He held "that in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution, the Union of these States is perpetual." "No State," he continued, "upon its own mere motion, can lawfully get out

of the Union; resolves and ordinances to that effect are legally void; and acts of violence within any State or States, against the authority of the United States, are insurrectionary or revolutionary, according to circumstances." His own policy he outlined as follows: "To the extent of my ability I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States. . . . In doing this there need be no bloodshed or violence; and there shall be none, unless it be forced upon the national authority. The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy and possess the property and places belonging to the government, and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere. . . . The mails, unless repelled, will continue to be furnished in all parts of the Union. . . ."

He concluded with the memorable words which have been so often quoted: "One section of our country believes slavery is right and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute. . . ."

"Physically speaking, we cannot separate. . . . In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. . . . We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from

every battle-field and patriot grave to every living heart and hearth-stone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

The effect of this address on the North was, for the time, to allay apprehension. Few people looked forward to any bloodshed. In the South, however, the effect was quite the opposite. It was not until April, 1861, when, after an ineffectual effort on the part of the Federal government to relieve Fort Sumter, it was attacked by the South Carolina troops, and Major Anderson with his garrison was obliged to surrender, that the people at the North for the first time realized that war had begun. The effect of the news was electric. "When on Monday, April 15, they read of the President's call for 75,000 militia to suppress combinations obstructing the execution of the laws in seven of the Southern States, they gave with one voice their approval of the policy foreshadowed, and rose almost as one man to the support of their chief magistrate."<sup>1</sup>

The attitude taken toward the war by the American partners appears in the following letters, written to the writer, who was then in Liverpool, by his brother-in-law, Mr. Howard Potter, who had recently joined the New York firm. Under date of May 7, 1861, he writes from New York:

MY DEAR JOHN:

NEW YORK, *May 7, 1861.*

I am glad to see that England is likely to take, as I always believed she would, a right view of the momentous contest inaugurated here by the attack on Fort Sumter. It is of great consequence in every

<sup>1</sup> "History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850." By James Ford Rhodes. Vol. III, p. 357.



Mr. Howard Potter

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point of view that she should do so and the more decided stand which England and France now take upon the side of right the sooner will the conclusion which all desire be reached, and that with the least effusion of blood. I hope that when the full import of the popular movement in support of the Constitution and the Union thro'out the Free States, with their twenty millions of citizens, is appreciated abroad we shall see such steps taken by the Great Powers for the suppression of the piracy which Jeff Davis has endeavored to legalize as will at once break the back of the Secession enterprise, as such a step most certainly and effectually would, disposing as it incidentally would of the hope of recognition on which all their other hopes depend. Nothing it seems to me but a misapprehension in regard to the dimensions of the disaffection to the Government of their Fathers on the part of the people of the U. S., and the consequent damages to its perpetuity can explain any hesitation on the part of the rest of the world to denounce J. D's emissaries under letters of marque as Pirates, for surely Long Island, composed as it is of the "Sovereign" Counties of Suffolk and Kings, would have just as much right, should its inhabitants revolt against the Federal Government and have a "Confederate" (name of ominous sound) Congress and a President of the J. D. stamp, to issue letters of marque and reprisal as that worthy himself. A Rebel [is] but a rebel, and Rebellion only rebellion, without regard to dimensions, until indeed they establish for themselves a right to some better designation, which will never be done in our friend J. D's case. It is of course not to be expected that the present state of things here should be fully appreciated in England, but at least the people of the North are entitled to an expression of her good wishes for the success of their cause, and it is therefore rather aggravating when they hear (considering the ill effect of such utterances on our Southern Brethren) the London "Herald" say that England must have cotton, if not by fair means then by foul, even though we understand, as we do fully, the dreadful apprehensions of suffering on the part of your manufacturing population, which in the "Herald's" opinion no doubt justified so odious a declaration. England can never get her cotton by foul means, however, nor by any means of which the Northern people do not fully approve, or rather



accord. Great as the power of England is, the day she should interfere in the settlement of this argument between the Federal Government and the Rebels by force of arms in any way, would witness the beginning of a movement which would wipe out with fire and sword both the cotton and those who raise it. This may sound extravagant, but it is true to the letter, and woe betide the day that shall see such fuel thrown upon the coals of Northern feeling which now glow everywhere thro'out the Free States. But I won't discourse any further on a theme so momentous, seeing that by the time this reaches you my speculations will all be superseded by the actual occurrences which must determine the character and extent of the contest.

HOWARD POTTER.

A few days later, replying to a letter of the writer's expressing the consternation with which the news of the war had been heard on the other side of the water, and his own regret that no means had been found to divert so deplorable a calamity, Mr. Potter writes as follows:

NEW YORK, *May 25*, 1861.

MY DEAR JOHN:

. . . How in view of the history of the conspiracy against the liberties of this people which has been corrupting every department of the Government, and wielding its whole power in preparation for its destruction, for the past eight years, proceeding at last to the humiliation of the National flag by open violence, the determination of the loyal people of the States to crush out at once and forever this monstrous treason can be characterized as "wicked, foolish, causeless," I cannot imagine, and I look with wonder, or with contempt, at the pedagogical self sufficiency which dares so to characterize a sublime and self-devoting consecration by this people of their all to the cause of constitutional liberty which their English and Revolutionary Forefathers so prized. Dreadful the war certainly is, abhorrent to every man of intelligence and patriotism who on this side engages in it, but none the less holy and necessary. A dire alternative, but a duty, so clear, so imperative, that to have shrunk from it would have not only covered us with infamy, but have resulted in the certain destruction of everything dear

to humanity in these States, in universal anarchy, and a relapse almost into barbarism. You talk of the horrors and disgrace of a civil war that might have been averted. How averted? Were not the forbearance and long suffering moderation of our people, incredulous to the last of the full intent of the Southern leaders, characterized in the English press (the same generous press which is now scoffing at this "wicked," this "foolish," uprising of the people) as indicative of an utter and hopeless demoralization, of a want of patriotism, of courage, of self denial, of all that makes a people great and heroic. And now forsooth this war might have been avoided by the Federal Government which, until its soldiers were hunted out of its own property with red hot shot, and its flag which symbolizes all the nation's past history and future hopes was disgraced by traitor hands, had borne with, and to the last endeavored to conciliate and win back its recreant children. In the whole history of the Southern rebellion has there been any show of moderation, any submission of the issue . . . . to the people, or any other than a spirit of defiance and domination exhibited?

Read Jeff Davis's so called Inaugural and look back and see whether the same tone has not been universal among the Southern leaders and then tell how when their premises bore fruit at Sumter the Government of these *United States* (for United they will be or nothing) should have avoided this "foolish," this "wicked" war for the preservation of the liberties of the people and of the Institutions and Laws of the Land. Should we have waited until the Confederate Pirates were seated in the Capitol and the President of the U. S. hanging in front of it, or until some of the slave-driving Senators should, as Mr. J . . . promised, call the roll of their slaves under the shadows of Bunker Hill and from the steps of Faneuil Hall. Alas! for England when such shall be the tone of her people. When it shall be evident, as "Punch" says of them:

"Tho with the North we sympathize,  
It must not be forgotten  
That with the South we've stronger ties  
Which are composed of cotton."

HOWARD POTTER.

The sentiment of relief and satisfaction with which the news of Mr. Bright's stalwart advocacy of the Northern cause was received in this country is reflected in the following brief letter, written some months later:

MY DEAR JOHN: NEW YORK, Friday Evening, *Jan. 10, 62.*

Yours of the 7th ult., and the "Daily News" containing Mr. Bright's noble speech, came duly to hand, and I am greatly obliged to you for sending me the latter. I shall be glad if you will repeat the favor should Mr. B. hereafter, while you are in E., make any more speeches on American affairs. His speech at Rochdale is in my judgment by far the fairest and noblest utterance which we have heard from England in these trying times, and it seemed to me so eminently calculated to subserve the interests of peace and good will amongst men that I put the copy you sent me at once into the printer's hands, and had an edition of a thousand copies printed, which we have been giving an excellent distribution here. I hope the good seed may bear an abundant fruit.

HOWARD POTTER

The call for troops seriously affected the office force of almost every prominent business firm throughout the Eastern and Northern States. For a time our own office was crippled, as many of our staff were members of the different militia regiments suddenly called to the front. My younger brother, Clarence Stewart, was a member of the Seventh Regiment and served from 1861 to 1863, at first as a private, afterward as an officer. Among others who were obliged to leave, was one of our cashiers, Milnor Brown, a son of Stewart Brown, a young man of fine character whose position at that time it was difficult to fill. He was killed in the battle of Gettysburg on July 4, 1863,

and my first and only experience of the horrors of war was a visit which I paid to the field a few days after the battle, —before the dead were all buried—in order, if possible, to ascertain his fate. Near one of the field hospitals I met two of his brothers who were there on the same sad errand.

The events which succeeded are familiar. At an extra session of Congress, held in the summer of 1861, the President asked for 400,000 men and \$400,000,000 in order to make the contest as short as possible, and at this same session additional taxation was provided for. Then followed the Trent affair which came near involving the country in war with England. Up to December 1st the Secretary of the Treasury had realized only \$197,000,000 of the \$400,000,000 asked for. Of this, \$100,000,000 came from sales of three-year 7.30 bonds, \$46,000,000 from twenty-year 6-per-cent. bonds sold on a 7-per-cent. basis, and the remaining \$51,000,000 from United States notes payable without interest. By the end of the year the financial outlook was decidedly gloomy. In spite of the fact that the Secretary of the Treasury and the banks worked together harmoniously, the money realized by these sales of bonds and from loans was soon exhausted, and on Saturday night, December 28, 1861, the managers of the New York banks decided that they must suspend specie payments. Gold soon brought a slight premium. In the early days of '62 Congress spent most of its time in discussing plans for increasing taxation and devising means to procure money to carry on the war. In February, 1862, the famous Legal-Tender Act was passed as a war measure and signed by the President, against the protest of many of the best and soundest men in Congress.

As will be readily understood, these measures, together with the repudiation of all commercial debts due by the South to the North, which took place at the outbreak of the war, caused many failures at the North, and added to the difficulties and anxieties of business, especially to those engaged in international trade. As all transactions with foreign countries had to be settled on a gold basis after the passage of the Legal-Tender Act, we were obliged to keep most of our office accounts in both gold and paper currency. This involved a great increase of detail work in the office records, and necessitated a corresponding increase in the office force. Moreover, after the first shock of the declaration of war was over, the volume of foreign business increased rapidly, business hours were lengthened and more office room was required. Accordingly, in 1864, two small buildings<sup>1</sup> in the rear of 59 Wall Street were purchased, and on the enlarged site a new structure was erected which was ready for occupancy May 1, 1865. While this was building the firm occupied quarters on the opposite side of the street, at No. 56, in the rear.

The new structure was among the first thoroughly fire-proof buildings in the city. Unlike the modern method of construction, where the steel frame carries the outer shell, the walls of this building were very heavy and were intended to carry the weight of the entire structure. Before the plans were adopted, Abner L. Ely and Edward H. Ludlow, the two leading real-estate brokers in the city, suggested that as remunerative rents could only be obtained from the first and second stories the building should

<sup>1</sup> In one of these buildings were held the first meetings of the Board of Directors of the Illinois Central Railroad Company, incorporated in 1851.



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be erected without any basement, the ceiling of the first story should be as low as was consistent with proper ventilation, so that the occupants of the second might have but few steps to climb, and the staircase should be made with easy risers. They recommended also that the building should be only four stories high, with the two upper ones in suites of small rooms for lawyers' offices. Accordingly, a broad and easy staircase was built, and the rent obtained for the second story, which was leased in advance to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, fully justified the opinion of the experts. At that time a passenger elevator for an office building was unheard of. It, however, soon made its appearance, and in order to retain tenants in the two upper stories the imposing and easy staircase had to be taken down to make room for two elevators. Some years later three additional stories were added. Almost for the first time in the construction of a New York building, supporting columns of rolled iron were used. The use of these columns was considered such an experiment that neither the architect nor the builder was willing to assume the responsibility, and the owners had to be content with the guarantee of the makers, the Phoenix Iron Company.

After the retirement of George and John A. Brown, and until 1864, the ownership and control of the business rested absolutely with William and James Brown; and after William Brown's death, with James alone until 1868. They decided when and what partners were to be admitted and what interest they should have in the business, continuing the practice which had prevailed during the lifetime of Alexander Brown, when he alone decided all such matters. As evidenced by a letter in the writer's



possession, it was the intention of James Brown to continue this arrangement had his sons lived to take his place. As, however, Sir William Brown at the time of his death had no sons to succeed him in Liverpool, and his grandsons were quite young men, and as James Brown's older sons (upon whose mature judgment at this time he could have relied) had died or retired, a change in the organization was made. While retaining the ideals and traditions which had prevailed in the past, and which had contributed to its success when the concern was merely a family affair, it was made more elastic and better adapted to modern conditions.

On the first of November, 1877, Mr. James Brown died. It is difficult for a son to write of a father to whom, from his earliest childhood, he has looked up with affection, respect and reverence, and with whom he was associated in business for nearly twenty years. It is better to let others speak of his character, although, perhaps, the writer may well describe his appearance. A man of medium stature, with short side whiskers and forehead slightly bald, erect in stature, alert in all his movements, walking with a quick, nervous step until past eighty years of age, dressed until past seventy in the old-fashioned costume of a New York merchant—black trousers, swallow-tail coat, wide black stock, low open waistcoat and thick linen shirt bosom always exposed to the air in the coldest weather—he stands before me as an example of perfect physical health. I do not remember ever seeing him confined to his bed by illness until the later years of his life.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It was only after his seventieth year that at the earnest request of his family physician he put on under flannel.



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A marked peculiarity in his manner of greeting strangers, resulting from his poor sight, often caused offence to those who did not know the real cause. I have already alluded to the defective vision of all Alexander Brown's sons. To correct it in his case as far as possible, the lenses in Mr. Brown's spectacles were of different magnifying power. When walking or looking at objects at a distance he applied the weaker lens to his better eye, but in that case he could not recognize any one at close quarters. Whenever, therefore, he was approached by a friend or a stranger, he instinctively drew back his head with a peculiar expression, reversed his glasses rapidly, and then met the person with his usual friendly greeting. The initial motions were certainly forbidding, and people often complained of what seemed to them almost an insulting stare.

In the early days of his business life stenographers and type-writers were not employed in business houses, and all correspondence was in long hand. In order to improve his naturally poor penmanship, he put himself, after he had grown to manhood, under the direction of a good writing-teacher, and by patient work on pothooks changed the whole character of his handwriting, which became as neat as copperplate. Until the day of his death, he wrote his own letters.

As an indication of the leisurely methods of business in the early days, it is an interesting fact that the earliest letter-book of Brown Brothers & Company, in which all of the letters written by the firm were copied by hand, contains pages of letters undoubtedly written by James Brown and then afterward copied by him into this office book.

A friend who knew him well thus describes him: "Punctual in all his business appointments; a keen and self-poised man; of an ardent temperament always under complete control; modest and retiring in disposition; sound in judgment of men and affairs; slow in giving his confidence, but thereafter rarely withdrawing it in spite of faults or mistakes; of a very genial nature, but finding most of his social pleasures in his own home and in his own family circle; courteous in his intercourse with his employees but expecting every man to do his best." One of his clerks, speaking of him, said: "He was the quietest, most polite old gentleman you ever saw. Why, if he came into the office and wanted a letter taken to the post, he would ask to have it done with a hundred apologies, and when it was done he would be profuse in his thanks. Until a few years ago, when he ceased coming to the office at all, he knew every employee, and always had a kind word for each one. If his character may be gauged by what we think of it here, then it certainly was of the highest."

His pastor, Mr. Mabon, thus characterizes Mr. Brown: <sup>1</sup>

Anyone observing the agile step of Mr. Brown—an agility which continued to the last year—would not hesitate to associate with it habits of industry. His habits of work began in early life under the training of a father, whom his distinguished sons, the Brown Brothers, proved an adept in practical education. I will say no more than that this merchant prince had the advantage of personal drilling in whatever had to be done in his father's store from a boy. The result was a life of uninterrupted attention to business. What rendered the

<sup>1</sup> Memorial address delivered in Grove Church, Hudson Co., N. Y., December 16, 1877, in remembrance of Mr. James Brown, deceased, November 1, 1877, by Wm. V. V. Mabon, New York, 1878.

transaction of so much business more easy was the perfect order and system which characterized his mind and simplified his work. He was not in any sense a robust man, but he was quick and indefatigable, and wasted no valuable hours in dreams and impracticabilities; but whatever he did, he did with his might, and so he prospered. What he did he finished, so that he was able to do something else.

The next thing to be noticed is his accurate, and I may say, his intuitive judgment. If Mr. Brown made mistakes it was not when left to himself and to his own deliberate conclusions. He was too confiding to be exempt at times from the errors of others. But his intellectual organization was as clear as crystal, and seemed to operate with the rapidity of lightning. Nor was the result a conclusion reached without the proper steps. But his mind flew like the wind over the proper approaches to the true result. . . . In his very late years, after relinquishing in a great measure the cares of business, he continued to retain until long after eighty an intellect and judgment as clear and infallible as in the best days of middle life.

A third quality of the man was a certain magnanimity. Whatever he did was on a worthy scale. His character was very positive. In his eyes "a vile person," no matter what his wealth or standing, "was despised." On the other hand, if he ever gave anything to anyone it was never in a small way. . . . His confidence, wherever he gave it, was unlimited. From his friends he withheld no trust, but was as open and as simple as a little child. But this was not until his confidence had been earned. Where he did not give it wholly, he withheld it entirely, and could be as unapproachable as he was accessible and confiding. . . . When he had to go into conflict he was an obstinate and dangerous antagonist; and in these days of Rings and forgeries and compounding felonies, it is refreshing to remember how he exulted in the fact of having spent thirty thousand dollars in bringing to hard labor in prison an accomplished forger of the checks of his banking house.

The last point I shall touch is his reticence. This quality is too often mistaken for poverty of ideas and want of capacity. Mr. Brown was not a man of words; he was not supposed to excel in giving out his thoughts; but I would like every one to know that no man ex-

celled him in expressing himself with a pen. I have the best reason for knowing his letters to be models of correct, clear and condensed expression on all the usual topics of life and letters. I have also the best authority for saying that his peculiar excellence in this line lay in the composition of business communications. It may be proper to add that he told me it was his habit, when it was [necessary] to answer a provoking letter, to put off the reply until the following day. His silence, then, was not mere modesty, but that concentration of force which left him free to accomplish more results through action and the employment of subordinate agents. His reserve was really reserved thought and reserved power. It was because he preferred the substance to the shadow. Witness the ruling passion strong in death. Not a flower on his coffin, nor a eulogy at his funeral, but within that coffin lay a heart as true and as warm as ever beat, which "had sought not the praise of man but of God."

Coming to New York in 1825, when it was a comparatively small city, Mr. Brown identified himself with the prominent civic, philanthropic and religious institutions of the place, and was a liberal contributor to the various organizations seeking to promote the welfare of the community in which he lived. He became a member of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, September 4, 1827, and was actively interested in its affairs until the time of his death, when only two of the associates were living who had entered before him. He was one of the earliest trustees of the New York Life Insurance Company, elected in 1845. He was one of the first directors of the New York branch of the Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Company, which was organized on the 6th of January, 1851, at the office of Brown Brothers & Company. He was its first chairman and served in that capacity until 1860. He was a trustee

of the Bank for Savings from 1846 to the time of his death. He was a member also of many prominent railroad companies centring in New York. It would be difficult to enumerate all the philanthropic and religious associations with which he was connected, and I can mention only a few of the most important. He was one of the founders of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, of which he was President from 1843 to 1875, and in which, during all his life, he took an active interest. He was also one of the founders of the Presbyterian Hospital and manager until the time of his death. He was President of the Board of Trustees of the New York Orthopædic Dispensary and Hospital from its beginning until the time of his death, Vice-President of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and Trustee of Union College from 1847 to 1877. He was also an Honorary Director of the Union Theological Seminary, in which, from its early days, he took a lively interest.

The work, however, which he loved best, and into which he threw himself most heartily, was that of the Christian Church, particularly the education of its ministers and the adequate support of their teachers. After worshipping for many years in one of the old Presbyterian churches in the lower part of the city, in 1844 he joined with others in the erection of the church at the corner of University Place and Tenth Street, of which he was one of the trustees and afterward an elder. His contributions to the erection and support of other churches in the city were numerous, and in the latter years of his life it was one of his greatest pleasures to be present at the Children's Service in Emmanuel Chapel, an offshoot of the University



Place Presbyterian Church, which owed its existence in a large measure to his beneficence.

When at his country home in Weehawken, on the heights above what is now the depot of the West Shore Railroad, he used to worship on Sundays at the old Reformed Dutch Church in what was known as the English Neighborhood, a hamlet on the Hackensack River about three miles north of his residence. There was also a little community clustered around the country store of the village of New Durham, half-way between Hoboken and the English Neighborhood, and about a mile and a half west of his residence. In a school-house in this village occasional services were held, and these later developed into regular morning and afternoon services supplied by a visiting clergyman, and supervised by the church at the English Neighborhood. The community increased so rapidly that in 1846 Mr. Brown purchased a beautiful grove of four or five acres of chestnut and other forest trees overlooking the Hackensack River and half-way between New Durham and his residence, and in 1847 a little church was erected, Mr. Brown and his brothers John and George, with other members of the community, contributing to the project.<sup>1</sup> In 1850 a parsonage was built, and in 1862 the church was enlarged through Mr. Brown's liberality. Out of this church have grown three or four other churches in the neighborhood, all of which are now in flourishing condition, and to every one of which Mr. Brown was a liberal contributor. He was also especially interested in

<sup>1</sup> It was a pleasant family custom that when any one of the brothers became interested in any work, a contribution to that work was almost always made by the others.

a Reformed Dutch Church at the home of his eldest son at Millbrook, in Dutchess County, and gave generously toward its erection.

A striking evidence of Mr. Brown's wisdom and foresight appears in the provision which he associated with his gift, during his lifetime, of \$300,000 to the Union Theological Seminary. He felt keenly that the usefulness of an educational institution depended more upon the character of its teachers than upon the buildings in which instruction was given, and that teachers generally, and especially those in theological seminaries, were underpaid. He therefore provided that his gift should be "set apart and held as an additional endowment fund" for the various professorships in the seminary, and that this income should be "paid over quarterly or semi-annually . . . unto the person or persons who shall successively occupy the office of President and Professor in the several professorships . . . independently of and in addition to any other salary or emoluments provided for or belonging to them as such." In other words, he did not intend to leave it to the discretion of the trustees to divert to any other use the income which he intended as an increase to the salaries of the professors.

The same good judgment appears in the conditions attached to a small legacy left by his will to the Reformed Dutch Church at Weehawken. The want of care and the slovenly appearance of the grounds and buildings of the average country church always impressed him painfully. He was, therefore, careful in his lifetime to insist that the officers of the little church in the country where he worshipped should keep the grounds and fences in perfect

order. That this same care might be continued after his death, and be an object-lesson to the community, he left in his will the sum of \$4,000 to the trustees of the church and provided that the income should be used:

First—In keeping in good condition and repair the fences around the church and parsonage grounds;

Secondly—In making such repairs to the parsonage, within and without, as the pastor, for the time being, may direct;

Thirdly—In staining, painting and keeping in good condition and repair the exterior of the church and school-house.

Reticent in any outward expression of his religious life, he nevertheless lived and died in the simple childlike faith of a Christian. The only time in all my life that I ever remember hearing him speak of his own personal religious faith was a very few years before his death, while still in perfect health and in complete possession of all his faculties. He said to me one day, "My son, I have lived all my life in fear of death, not knowing how to meet it, and now that fear has all passed away. It seems so natural to die."

Mr. Brown died on the 1st of November, 1877, at his residence, 38 East Thirty-seventh Street, in the eighty-seventh year of his age. The immediate cause of his death was pneumonia. Though living far beyond the allotted time of man, he passed peacefully into the other life before the infirmities of old age had weakened either his mental or physical powers.

He was twice married. His first wife was Louisa Kirkland Benedict, daughter of the Rev. Joel Benedict, of Plain-

field, Connecticut. She died abroad in 1829, and was buried in the cemetery at Lyons in France. They had six children, of whom three were living at the time of his death, Sarah Benedict Brown, widow of Alexander Brown of Beilby Grange, Yorkshire, England, mother of Sir Alexander Hargreaves Brown, Bart., at present senior member of the firm of Brown, Shipley & Company, London; Mary Louisa Potter, wife of Howard Potter, also a partner of Brown Brothers & Company and Brown, Shipley & Company; and Margaretta Hunter Lord, widow of James Cooper Lord.

In 1831 he was married to Eliza Maria Coe, daughter of the Rev. Jonas Coe, D.D., of Troy, New York. They had five children of whom two were living at the time of his death—George Hunter Brown and the writer.

As an unusual mark of the respect in which Mr. Brown was held by the community, by the order of Mayor Ely, flags on the public buildings of the city were placed at half-mast at the time of his death—a tribute I do not remember ever being paid to another private citizen.

James Brown had five sons, and it was his expectation that after competent training they would become his partners, and that the business would be transmitted to them. In this he was sadly disappointed. His eldest son, James Alexander, never became a partner, although he was in the office for a short time. On July 3, 1847, shortly after his marriage to Maria Louisa Howland, he was accidentally shot by a toy cannon discharged by his young brother-in-law and some other boys, whose celebration of the Fourth he was trying to facilitate.

Mr. Brown's second son, William Benedict, after a

service of some length in the Boston office, was admitted as a partner of the New York house on the 1st of January, 1853, and his father was looking forward with great interest to the relief which his presence would afford when, on September 27, 1854, through the sinking of the ill-fated steamer *Arctic* off the coast of Newfoundland, he was drowned. With Mr. Brown perished his wife, their child and its nurse, three other members of Mr. James Brown's family, and an old nurse long in their employ, making eight in all. Only one of the party was saved, Mr. George F. Allen, the husband of Mr. Brown's second daughter, Grace.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Brown's third son, George Hunter, who from his childhood had been an invalid, became a partner in 1858, but owing to ill health was obliged to retire in 1862. For several years before he entered the New York firm he had been in Mobile,<sup>2</sup> in the office of Charles D. Dickey, resident agent of the firm in that city.

<sup>1</sup> The *Arctic* was run into by the French steamer *Vesta* in a fog about seventy miles from land. The sea was perfectly smooth, and all the passengers could have been saved. The captain, however, lost his head. There was no discipline on board, and the firemen and crew seized the boats, leaving the passengers to their fate. It was several hours after the collision before the ship foundered. Meanwhile the passengers provided themselves with life-preservers and food, and improvised rafts out of settees and movable furniture in the hope of being picked up by passing vessels. The members of Mr. Brown's family were all assembled on the upper deck, and they had agreed among themselves (according to Mr. Allen's report) that if only one could be saved, that one, for her mother's sake, should be Mr. Brown's youngest daughter. She had left home the year before to accompany her invalid sister, Mrs. Allen. It is a remarkable fact that, after the vessel sank, every one of the family, including the nurses and infants, were seen by Mr. Allen alive, clinging to some portion of the wreckage. With several others, including the captain, he climbed upon the paddle-box, which had been torn off and turned over when the vessel went down, thus forming a kind of boat. From this they were later rescued by a fishing vessel.

<sup>2</sup> He also spent the winter of 1856 in the office at New Orleans.



**Mr. Clarence Stewart Brown**



**Mr. George Hunter Brown**

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Mr. Brown's fourth son, the writer, entered the New York office in the autumn of 1862, after spending two years in the Liverpool office, and became a partner in 1864.

Mr. Brown's fifth and youngest son, Clarence Stewart, entered the office in 1863, and became a partner in 1867, retiring in 1868. During the Civil War he served first as a private in the Seventh Regiment, and afterward by regular appointment as an officer.<sup>1</sup>

To supply George Hunter Brown's place, a power of attorney was given in 1859 to Mr. Brown's son-in-law, Howard Potter, who was then actively engaged as one of the officers of the Novelty Iron Works in New York in which Mr. Brown held the controlling interest. Mr. Potter became a partner in 1863.

In 1859, the same year in which Mr. Potter's connection with the firm began, Charles Denston Dickey, who since 1846 had represented the firm as agent in Savannah and afterward in Mobile, became a partner. From his long experience as a purchaser of sterling exchange in the South, and from his mature judgment, he was eminently fitted for the post. Having entered the New York office

<sup>1</sup> Soon after the Seventh Regiment reached Washington, he received an appointment on the staff of General McDowell with the rank of major, and was present at both battles of Bull Run. After being detained in Washington for several months on business connected with the Court of Inquiry on General McDowell, and after it was evident that the public and unjust imputations against the General's conduct and character would be removed, he left General McDowell for active service again. He received an appointment as inspector, with rank of lieutenant-colonel, on General Reynolds' staff, and was preparing to take the field just before the battle of Fredericksburg. In some way, how I do not know, the arrangement fell through, and he resigned from the army in 1863 and entered the office. He died in 1875.



as a lad, he was familiar with the history and traditions of the firm. He had, moreover, a peculiar aptitude for dealings in sterling exchange, and his forecast of the market was almost intuitive.

Mr. Dickey remained in Mobile during the winter of 1859 in order to introduce to the friends of the firm in that city Mr. Herman Hoskier, who had been chosen to take his place as agent. He returned North in the spring of 1860. At that time New York was not a comfortable place of residence for one whose friends and relatives were largely in the South, and with the next year after the beginning of the war the animosity against any one who came from the South increased. Accordingly, in the summer of 1861, the New York house suggested to the Liverpool firm that it might be well to use Mr. Dickey's services in opening and establishing a house in Paris, a venture for which the time then seemed ripe. As James Brown was then abroad the matter was referred to him and to the Liverpool partners. The subject received their careful consideration, but as it was not thought safe to expand the credit business to any great extent at that time, and as the laws of France governing bills of exchange required delivery of documents on acceptance, thereby increasing the risks of the business, the project was abandoned, and Mr. Dickey was asked to come to Liverpool for a time to assist in the office there.

In 1860, William Harmon Brown, Stewart Brown's second son, entered the New York office with power to sign for the firm. Mr. Brown had spent the winter of 1857-1858 in New Orleans and the period from September, 1858, to December, 1859, in the Liverpool office. He



**Mr. Charles Denston Dickey**

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left Brown Brothers & Company a few years afterward to become the partner of Frantz B. Müller, a well-known merchant in New York, under the firm name of Müller & Brown. Still later, in 1881, he formed the firm of Stewart Brown's Sons.<sup>1</sup>

The more recent changes in the personnel of the firm may be briefly referred to. In 1875, John E. Johnson, who had entered the office as a boy, became a partner. He retired in 1886. On January 1, 1881, Mr. Waldron Post Brown, son of James M. Brown, who had already spent two years, from 1868 to 1870,<sup>2</sup> in the service of the firm, again joined the office staff, with power of attorney to sign for the firm. He became a partner January 1, 1887. As already mentioned in Chapter X, Charles D. Dickey, Jr., who since 1887 had held power of attorney for the firm in the Philadelphia office, became a partner in 1889, with residence in New York. The staff was still further strengthened by the presence in New York during the summer months of 1889 and 1890 of Charles F. Hoffman, resident agent in New Orleans, who, at the earnest request of both Mr. Dickey, and Mr. Potter, joined the New York staff permanently in January, 1891.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On April 12, 1860, Mr. Brown married Lucretia Titus, daughter of George Norton and Lydia A. Titus, of New York. He was Director of the Corn Exchange Bank for thirty years, one of the founders of the Manhattan Eye and Ear Infirmary, life member of the New York Historical Society and of the Mercantile Library Association, honorary member of the Young Men's Christian Association and a member of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

<sup>2</sup> After his marriage in 1870 Mr. Brown went out to Rio Janeiro, returning by way of Paris. Early in July he became a partner in the firm of Wright, Brown & Company, who took over the business of the old house of Wright & Company, of Rio Janeiro. The firm was dissolved in December, 1880, when Mr. Brown resumed again his previous connection with Brown Brothers & Company.

<sup>3</sup> He died April 9, 1909.

In 1895, Eugene Delano was transferred to New York, followed by James M. Duane in 1898. In 1901, James Brown, son of George Hunter Brown and grandson of James Brown, who had been brought up in the office from his boyhood, and who had received power of attorney in 1899, became a partner. On January 1, 1907, Thatcher Magoun Brown, son of the writer, and Moreau Delano, son of Eugene Delano, who also had received their training in the office and held the firm's power of attorney from 1902 and 1904 respectively, entered the firm, and the same year James M. Brown, son of Waldron P. Brown, received power to sign for the firm.

In 1898, No. 3 Hanover Street, which had recently been purchased by the writer, was added to the firm's premises, the upper floors being used for the force of stenographers, and the main floor as a consulting-room for the private office. Nine years later, in 1907, owing to the growth of business and the necessity for greater room, the premises heretofore occupied by the Bank of Montreal in the second story, together with the small office at the left of the entrance on the main floor, were added, the Bond Department being transferred to the second story and the Travelling Credit Department occupying the small front office.

I cannot close the account of the New York house in which I have passed over forty-six years of my life without paying my tribute to the ability, loyalty and faithfulness of the members of our staff, many of whom have spent their lives in our service. Four who have died while I have been a partner were with us from thirty to thirty-six years: Thomas Nichols, from 1849 to 1884; Albert A. Johnson, from 1863 to 1893; Charles R. Hone, from 1866



**Mr. Charles Denston Diekey, Jr.**



**Mr. Waldron Post Brown**

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to 1899; H. R. Husted, from 1871 to 1907. Two now living have resigned after thirty to thirty-seven years of work: James L. Gillen,<sup>1</sup> from 1857 to 1894; and John Keeler, from 1875 to 1905. Of our present staff, nine have been from twenty-eight to forty-five years in our office and are still in active service: Charles D. Simons, from 1863; E. S. Tompkins, from 1864; C. F. Dellinger, from 1865; F. B. Meeker, from 1866; Herbert Seymour, from 1872; Newbold Le Roy, from 1875;<sup>2</sup> E. F. Myers, from 1880; John Lawrence, our chief porter, from about 1875. Closely associated as I have been with these and many others who have joined the staff more recently, I could mention many acts and words that have drawn us closely together in the furtherance of a common purpose, but I must content myself with a word of commendation of Mr. Simons for his management of our Exchange Department for many years, and especially through the trying days of 1890-1891, 1893, and 1907-1908, as well as of Mr. Dellinger, head of our staff, one of the longest in service, thoroughly acquainted with all the details of our business, quiet, efficient, courteous, to whose administration of the office much of the comfort of the partners is due.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In a letter dated "18th December, 1899," James S. Gillen, whose father was the porter of the firm, and who came to the office occasionally after school hours for errands, writes, "As a matter of comparison it may interest you to know that according to my earliest recollection the office staff in 1847 consisted of seven persons, a head clerk, cashier, bill-clerk, credit clerk, bookkeeper, assistant bookkeeper, and a general clerk, with one or two boys, and a porter." The staff now numbers 98 in all, which includes 78 men, 14 women and 6 porters.

<sup>2</sup> For many years Mr. Le Roy has held the limited power of attorney to sign for the firm, and is now cashier.

<sup>3</sup> On April 25, 1909, Mr. Dellinger received full power of attorney, to take Mr. Hoffman's place.



## CHAPTER XIV

### BOSTON

1844-1908. OPENING OF THE BOSTON AGENCY UNDER THE NAME OF BROWN BROTHERS & COMPANY.

**A**S the commerce of the country increased, the exceptional facilities afforded by the harbors of New York and Boston, and their accessibility to the ocean, caused the foreign trade of the country to become more and more centred in these two Northern cities, and, as a result, the New York firm gradually assumed the leading position among the American houses.

The East India trade, however, was largely controlled in Boston and its vicinity, and to secure a share of that lucrative business, an agency was established there on December 31, 1844. Exclusive of Charlestown, Roxbury and Cambridge, which may be regarded as suburbs, Boston had at this time a population of somewhat more than a hundred thousand. It was the most homogeneous of the larger American cities, a fact which was due to the large proportion of its population which was of native white descent. English travellers, visiting the city in the fifth decade of the last century, comment upon its substantial character and general air of prosperity.

J. S. Buckingham, writing in 1841,<sup>1</sup> remarks that "the

<sup>1</sup> "America, Historical, Statistic, and Descriptive." By J. S. Buckingham, Esq. London, 1841.



**Mr. Eugene Delano**



**Mr. James May Duane**

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most striking feature in the general aspect of the buildings and streets of Boston, whether in the business quarter, or 'Heart of the City,' as it is called, or in the more private and fashionable quarters, is the solidity and substantiality of their exterior, and the amplitude of comfort in their interior. There are few or no wooden houses to be seen, as in New York and Philadelphia; stone and brick are the chief materials of the buildings, and these are of the best kind. . . . The cleanliness of every part of the city is as remarkable as is its air of comfort. No dilapidated houses or untenanted dwellings meet the eye; the streets are well paved, well lighted, and well swept and drained; many of the less traversed ones are macadamized; and neither mud in the wet weather nor dust in the dry, occasions half the inconvenience that both do in New York. . . ."

A similar impression was made upon Sir Charles Lyell,<sup>1</sup> who also comments upon the simplicity of the life which was lived in these same substantial mansions: "The number of persons in Boston who have earned in business, or have inherited large fortunes, is very great. The Common, or small park, which is by no means the only quarter frequented by rich citizens, is surrounded by houses which might form two fine squares in London. . . . The greater part of these buildings are fitted up very elegantly, and often expensively. Entertainments in a sumptuous style are not rare; but the small number of servants in comparison with those kept in England by persons of corresponding income, impart to their mode of life an

<sup>1</sup>"A Second Visit to the United States of America." By Sir Charles Lyell. New York, 1849.

appearance of simplicity which is, perhaps, more the result of necessity than of deference to a republican theory of equality. For to keep servants here for mere show would not only be thought absurd, but would be a great sacrifice of comfort. . . . Many of the wealthiest families keep no carriage, for, as I have before said, no one affects to live in style, and the trouble of engaging a good coachman and groom would be considerable. . . . The distances in Boston are small, and the facilities of travelling by railway into the country in all directions very great. But there are many livery stables, where excellent carriages and horses are to be hired with well dressed drivers. Some of their vehicles are fitted up with India rubber tubes, to enable those inside to communicate with the coachman without letting down the glass, which, during a severe New England frost, or a snowstorm, must be no unmeaning luxury.”

On the moral character of the city at the time, the same traveller writes thus: “The impress of the strict morals of the Puritan founders of the New England Commonwealths on the manners of their descendants is still very marked. Swearing is still seldom heard, and duelling has been successfully discountenanced.”

The Boston agency was established under the management of Thomas B. Curtis, who announced his appointment in the following advertisement which appeared in the “Boston Daily Advertiser” of December 31, 1844:

*NOTICE*

The subscriber has been appointed Agent and Attorney for Messrs.  
Brown Brothers & Co.,

THOMAS B. CURTIS,      35 Central Wharf.



**Mr. James Brown**



**Mr. Thatcher Magoun Brown**



**Mr. Moreau Delano**

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Mr. Curtis belonged to a well-known Boston family and had a wide acquaintance in the commercial, social and political circles as a merchant. He had been the Boston representative of the London firm of Fletcher, Alexander & Company. On their impending liquidation, of which he appears to have received information from Brown Brothers & Company, of New York, he was asked by the latter firm to represent them in Boston. Mr. Curtis accepted the invitation, retaining the office at 63 State Street on the main floor, which he had previously occupied as representative of Fletcher, Alexander & Company. As will appear from the circular printed below,<sup>1</sup> the business conducted by Mr. Curtis for Fletcher, Alexander & Company was similar to the business in which Brown Brothers & Company were already engaged, and for that reason Mr. Curtis was eminently fitted for the post.

It was no easy matter to work up a lucrative credit business in Boston, for the Messrs. Barings had been long

<sup>1</sup> BOSTON, Jan. 1st, 1839.

Messrs. Fletcher, Alexander & Co. will open accounts and grant facilities, upon the following terms:

Bills on credits available in the East Indies to be drawn at six months sight or at ten months date and to be covered *in London* before maturity: all others to be provided for, upon advice of their being drawn: bills remitted for such purpose to be substantially drawn and at the risk of the remitter.

Bills of lading of merchandise intended as remittance to be seasonably forwarded to the order of Messrs. Fletcher, Alexander & Co. & the property to be addressed by them to such houses as may be designated by the shipper, if in good standing: such shipments not to be considered as remittances beyond two thirds of their market value: proceeds of other shipments or balances in account with other houses not to be considered as remittances, until actually at the disposition of Messrs. F. A. & Co.

Payment for merchandise imported into the United States "to order" to be satisfactorily arranged for, before delivery of the Bills of Lading.

Policies of insurance, in all cases, are to be made payable to the order of Messrs.



in the field and were well represented by their agent, Thomas W. Ward, a man of exceptional business ability. In those days it would have been considered discourteous, as it certainly would have been useless, for a new concern to approach the clients of one long established. Mr. Curtis, however, a good judge of men, soon gained a foothold by granting credits to young merchants and others with moderate means, provided they were intelligent and honest. The goods imported under these credits were consigned to Brown Brothers & Company, and surrendered on arrival either against security or with the understanding that the proceeds were to be paid to them. Dealings with this class of customers, of course, had its drawbacks, for at times, when sales were slow, payments were often deferred. The result, on the whole, however, was satisfactory. It was doubtless due to Mr. Curtis's knowledge of the men and the community in which he lived, and to his great tact, that the firm in the early days secured so good a footing in Boston, where so many of the rich and influential families had, from father to son, transacted all their foreign commercial and shipping business with Barings.

F. A. & Co. and all property or freights intended as remittance, to be placed within their control, in due season to meet their engagements for the parties.

India credits will be issued with or without the provision that Bills of Lading shall accompany the drafts, but it is suggested that there is much security, to all parties, in providing that such evidence of the *legitimate use* of the Credit should come forward with the drafts.

Banking commission will be charged only on the amount drawn: on bills from India it will be two pr. ct., on those from South America one & a half pr. ct. & on all others one pr. ct.

Correspondents requiring facilities, will show that their accounts are in conformity with these arrangements. I am, respectfully,

Your Obed't Serv't.

(Signed) T. B. CURTIS.



The Boston Office

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An illustration of the disappearance of certain lines of business is afforded by the history of the Tudor Company—one of the large customers of the Boston firm. They were owners or part owners of a line of clipper ships (sailing between Boston and the East). These vessels were loaded with ice for India and China, and brought back cargoes of teas and East India products, for the purchase of which credits were opened by our Boston house. The manufacture of ice by mechanical process, now so universally used in hot countries, put a stop to this entire business.

The introduction of rapid communication with the Old World by steam and ocean cables changed the whole character of Eastern trade. The old mercantile firms both in Boston and in New York gradually disappeared, and trade with the Orient is now mainly in the hands of brokers who, by means of cable and telegraph, deal directly with the shipper abroad and the merchant in interior cities in whose favor credits are opened. The business of the Boston house, however, continued to increase, owing to the introduction and rapid development of the manufacturing industries of the New England States. Hides for the manufacture of leather, wool for the manufacture of woollen goods, and even Egyptian cotton for mixture with the native-grown cotton for all fine goods (now the main business of the New England cotton-mills) were required by the manufacturers in the Eastern cities, and credits were opened in Boston for the importation of these and other like articles in large quantities. The descendants of the old Boston merchants, whose names were household words in the East, became interested in mills in New Eng-

land and railroad projects in the West and elsewhere, using their capital in this way to better advantage for themselves and for the welfare of the country at large.

In 1850, Daniel Sargent Curtis, Thomas B. Curtis's oldest son, joined his father in the Boston office. Mr. Curtis writes:

My own knowledge of the business began about 1850, when having graduated A.B. at Harvard, and L.L.B. at Dane Law School, and passed a year in the office of J. J. & M. S. Clarke in Brazer Building, I was admitted to practice in the Courts; and after a tour abroad was about to open an office as Counsellor and Attorney at Law when my father proposed my first coming into his office to see what trade, commerce, banking, insurance, &c., &c. were practically, before counselling about them; and also to know the business community. This seemed sensible, and I accordingly entered the office, never to return to the law. I sometimes suspect that my father always had this plan in view for me, when my college and legal studies should end.

July 12, 1852, Mr. Curtis authorized his son to act as his representative in his absence, and requested Brown Brothers & Company to authorize his son's signature on bills of exchange, as per following letter:

BOSTON, *July 12th, 1852.*

MESS. BROWN BROTHERS & Co., N. Y.

*Dear Sirs:*—I am requesting Messrs. Brown, Shipley & Co. & Mess. Heywood, Kennards & Co. to honor bills which may come signed by my son Mr. Daniel Sargent Curtis, whose signature I send to them. Will you so authorize them? It will relieve me from some anxiety as to loss of sales of bills when absent from my office. He will sign as my substitute.

I am living for the summer at Nahant and some days do not come to town and I may be absent for a week or two by and bye.

Mr. D. S. Curtis is discreet and will carefully exercise the power intrusted. Faithfully yours, (Signed) THOS. B. CURTIS.



**Mr. Thomas Buckminster Curtis**



**Mr. Daniel Sargent Curtis**

1854

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For many years after this, during the frequent absences of Mr. Curtis, Sr., his son conducted the business alone, with frequent visits to Boston, however, from the New York partners; and in 1863, on the retirement of his father, he became the representative of the firm in Boston, assisted by Starkes Whiton and George E. Bullard, who were empowered to sign for the firm during occasional absences of Mr. Curtis.<sup>1</sup>

In 1860 the office was removed to Blake's building, corner of State and Washington Streets, and in 1870 to a new building, 66 State Street, opposite the Exchange. In 1891 another move was made to 50 State Street, and in 1904 the office was transferred to its present quarters at No. 60.

The annals of the Boston office in the early days were happily devoid of extraordinary incident, but one or two matters may be recalled. On the return voyage in 1851 of the steamer *Baltic* of the Collins line, in which Mr. and Mrs. James Brown and family were passengers, the ship was reported at Provincetown out of coal. Mr. T. B. Curtis *at once*, on his own responsibility and at his own cost, despatched a cargo of coal, by which, after some days' detention, the steamer was enabled to proceed to New York.

Another incident was the seizure and detention of the ship *Baltic* by the United States marshal, with passengers and freight for San Francisco. Her release and departure were effected by Captain Isaac Taylor, one of our Boston

<sup>1</sup> We hereby give notice that upon the retirement of Mr. Thomas B. Curtis, hitherto our Agent in Boston, on and after this date we shall be represented by Mr. Daniel Sargent Curtis. BROWN BROTHERS & Co.,  
NEW YORK, January 1st, 1863.



customers. On another occasion his ability and energy helped the firm to secure title to two vessels of an insolvent firm, sold by us at auction as mortgagee, *without possession*, though at sea. Baring's agent boarded the vessels at Ferrol, but found Taylor's brother already in possession, as he had cruised outside the port and boarded her before arrival.

Daniel Sargent Curtis retired in 1878,<sup>1</sup> as did also Mr. Whiton, and they were succeeded by George E. Bullard and Louis Curtis, Thomas B. Curtis's youngest son. Mr. Louis Curtis still continues to represent the firm, assisted by George Abbot and George A. Nash, with power to sign for the firm since 1899.

In 1907, Henry P. Binney, step-son of Mr. Bullard, who had been employed by the firm for many years, was added to the staff with authority to sign for the firm.

Saturday, November 24, 1906, was a gala day in the Boston office. On that day Mr. Bullard completed fifty years of continuous service. The occasion was celebrated not only by messages of congratulation from members of the firm, but also by congratulatory calls from members of the leading business firms in the city of Boston. Two years later, on December 31st, 1908, Mr. Bullard retired from the agency.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Curtis's retirement was announced by Messrs. Brown Brothers & Company in the following circular:

Mr. Daniel Sargent Curtis having relinquished our Agency in Boston, our business in that City will be conducted by Mr. George E. Bullard and Mr. Louis Curtis, who are individually authorized to sign for us by power of attorney.

BROWN BROTHERS & Co.,

NEW YORK, January 1st, 1878.

After his retirement Mr. Curtis went abroad, and finally settled in Venice, where he lived until his death in the summer of 1908. He was a man of cultivated tastes, and spent the closing years of his life in literary pursuits.



**Mr. George E. Bullard**



**Mr. Louis Curtis**

*From a photograph copyrighted by Meutchen*

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## CHAPTER XV

### SOUTHERN AGENCIES

**EARLY RELATIONS OF BROWN BROTHERS & COMPANY WITH THEIR SOUTHERN CORRESPONDENTS. THE SOUTHERN AGENCIES. I. CHARLESTON. II. SAVANNAH. III. NEW ORLEANS. IV. MOBILE.**

**I**N the early days of the firm and during the lifetime of Alexander Brown, cotton raised in the South was shipped mainly from New Orleans, Mobile, Savannah and Charleston, and in all these places the firm had its correspondents and later its own agents. The business of these correspondents and afterward of the agents was to advance a safe amount of money on cotton consigned to the Liverpool house for sale and also to buy bills of exchange against shipments of cotton to England and the Continent usually with bills of lading attached.

A letter dated August 7, 1820, from Alexander Brown & Sons to William Brown in Liverpool sheds light on the difficulty experienced by the firm in finding a proper representative in some of the Southern ports. This was notably true in the case of New Orleans and Mobile.

With respect to the management of the business in Orleans there is some difficulty. W. Lanahan & Bogart we think safe, and have no doubt made something, but every house in Orleans who do a comm. business must necessarily be much exposed; executing orders for the Atlantic states and reciprocating endorsements, which they have to

procure on all their drafts passed through the Bank, exposes them very much. Hence the danger of placing large sums there under the control of any comn. house to wait the uncertain result of limited cotton purchases, and yet its possible more funds might be wanted than they (W. L. & B.) would have credit to pay bills for. We have no fears of giving them authority to draw, as they want funds, but we would not like to have monies laying there at our risk, until they are actually required, and yet if cottons are at prices that will suit, Orleans is the very point it wd. be desirable to have specie accruing in the months of January and February, to lessen the necessity of drawing so [many] bills; at that season of the year Exchange on the Atlantic states and on England is generally at a considerable discount. This would make it particularly desirable that some confidential person from the Liverpool Gentlemen should be in Orleans. In a year or two its not unlikely W. L. & B. may be so firmly established that we would feel no uneasiness at large funds being in their hands, but their means cannot be very large and the Flowers' failure, who were said to have immense means, makes us wish to act cautiously. In the meantime, however, we do not see how you can make advances on or guarantee property going to Orleans. Mr. W. L. says they do not guarantee nor would not for 10 pc. He says no house in Orleans guarantees. You can therefore only recommend them as our friends, but as they do not guarantee, you of course cannot; the shippers must run their own risk on property going to that quarter or keep it at home.

In a letter of Alexander Brown & Sons, in 1822, mention is made of J. A. Brown's being in New Orleans, and doubtless there were many other occasions when the younger partners visited both New Orleans and Mobile. In the former city, Benjamin Story, Joseph Fowler, Jr., and John Hagan & Company acted as correspondents of the firm. In Mobile they were represented by McCloskey & Hagan.

In Charleston and Savannah, on the other hand, they had no difficulty in finding proper representatives. In the



**Mr. George A. Nash**



**Mr. Henry P. Binney**



**Mr. George Abbot**

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former place Adger & Black acted for them, and in the latter John Cumming & Son. Between Mr. James Adger and Mr. Alexander Brown an old friendship had existed dating back to Mr. Brown's early days in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> In the case of the Cummings there seems to have been a family connection. The high esteem in which both these firms were held appears in the letter of Alexander Brown & Sons, from which we have already quoted. "There can be no risk," they write to William Brown in Liverpool, "in sending any quantity of specie, if thought advisable, to Adger & Black, or to John Cumming."<sup>2</sup> These two concerns and their successors practically acted as agents of the firms in their respective cities, although I cannot find any mention of their formal appointment.

During the early years of the New York firm an active correspondence seems to have been carried on with the different Southern representatives.<sup>3</sup> In another chapter extracts from this correspondence have already been given which give a vivid picture of the financial distress in England and this country during 1825 and 1826, and of the conservative course adopted by the New York firm in these trying times. Further extracts from the same correspondence are given here.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 262, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, John Cumming, of John Cumming & Son. The earliest letter-book of Alexander Brown and Sons, Baltimore, contains copies of letters written from 1810 to 1814 addressed to William Cumming, J. & J. Cumming, and to Thomas Cumming, Savannah. Whether these firms or individuals were correspondents or acted as agents I have been unable to ascertain. I am informed by Mr. James Hunter, a relative of Dr. John Cumming, that the Cummings mentioned above had no connection with his family.

<sup>3</sup> This was no doubt the case with the Baltimore and Philadelphia firms also, but the correspondence has not been preserved.



Thus, on October 22, 1825, they write to John Hagan & Company as follows: "Our establishment here is hardly under way but will [be] by the time the storm at Liverpool blows over; it will then be seen who weathers it. As we find from A. B. & Sons' letters they showed your Mr. Hagan the situation, his mind will be at ease, as he knows we will get off with the loss of a spar or two, which we can spare."

On the same day, in writing to Joseph Fowler, Jr., they speak of failures in Liverpool, and report "such times as were never before experienced there," adding, "The mischief is extending" here.

On November 16, 1825, they write to Benjamin Story, asking him to use his influence to secure consignments to their Liverpool house: "Such a year as this will no doubt cause some to change their correspondents, and we shall no doubt get our share. . . . If you have it in your power to influence any consignments to W. & J. B. & Co. by drawing on us for such advance as you may give or endorsing the owners' drafts on us as may be most agreeable, the one p'ct. chargeable to them we will place to your credit. In an arrangement of this kind W. & J. Brown & Co. should be advised that we will be drawn on for the advance to prevent its being drawn for in both places. The necessary papers in this case, say Invoice, Bill of Lading, and orders for Insurance, would of course be handed us thro' you."

In the same letter they refer to the "high gratification" of one of their correspondents, a certain Mr. Hicks, "at the course pursued by William & James Brown & Company at a time when most other houses were refusing to pay

bills on themselves further than the property in hand would meet."

To the same correspondent they write on January 3, 1826: "We are not by any means anxious for a large business here and are determined if possible to do a safe one and not put to hazard what we have."

The same note recurs frequently in the correspondence. Thus, on December 29, 1825, they write to Joseph Fowler, Jr.: "We are not anxious for a large business and are determined to do a safe one, and our situation here offers such advantages to shippers of cotton we presume in time we shall get a share of what is going."

To McCloskey & Hagan they write, under date of February 8, 1826: "You would see from the public papers the distressing state of the money market in England and are surprised that under that state of things prices of produce generally keep so high. Liverpool and Manchester had not been affected by it and the above prices may be maintained for some time, particularly so, as cotton has gone on so slow from this country. When the bulk of the crop goes on we think they will be lower. We have had several failures here within the week. We quote Cotton:

Uplands,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  d. to  $9\frac{1}{2}$  d.  
New Uplands  $8\frac{1}{2}$  d. to  $9\frac{1}{2}$  d.  
Orleans,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  d. to 11 d.  
Tennessee 7 d. to  $9\frac{1}{2}$  d."

Two months later, under date of April 5, 1826, they write to Benjamin Story: "We enclose the evening paper which contains the latest London accounts. ———t's fail-

ure we find don't affect any one here directly except —— and —— . . . This country, however, must be most seriously affected by the return of Bills drawn in Columbia on ——, but on whom the effects will develop themselves it is impossible to tell. Not one of them had gone to W. & J. B. & Co. and up to March 3rd everything went on as well as we could wish with them, but the mercantile distress was appalling."

On May 2, 1826, they write to John Hagan & Company: "We are pleased that you have done nothing in Cotton on your own account, as we cannot help thinking that the time will come when purchases made and held for moderate freights will enable you to make up the losses of last year. What has induced shippers to give the prices demanded for Cotton here under our European advices we are at a loss to conceive. We have discouraged our friends as far as we could, as there is no satisfaction in doing a losing business. All think the losses on shipments from the U. S. this season will be from 10 to 20 per cent. unless a rise takes place in England, of which we can see no immediate prospect from the depressed state of English manufactures."

Later letters to Benjamin Story indicate a gradual revival of prosperity:

6 Sept. 1826.

W. & J. B. & Co. write under date of 24th of July, "On that and the following days our Cotton market was very heavy and sales were made lower than at any former period, but there was some little revival in trade at Manchester on the 25th which has continued and has produced a material change for the better here." B. B. & Co. add: "Here everything is very dull. There are few operations in cotton."

16 Oct. 1826.

Liverpool advices up to the 16th of September report the market steady. Everything goes on smoothly and regularly here without any more failures.

14 Dec. 1826.

Advices from Liverpool of 16 November report market for New Orleans Cotton very quiet.

On March 1, 1827, writing to McCloskey & Hagan, they see no further cause for anxiety: "Business in the manufacturing districts in England being good we don't think there is any chance of loss by shipments at the present low prices and there is a chance of gain."

The attitude of the firm on one of the vexed questions which are often likely to arise in business appears from the following letter of December 12, 1826, to Joseph Fowler, Jr., with reference to a dispute which had arisen between them:

Your esteemed favor of 22 ulto. we received yesterday and now return your draft on Messrs. Bogart & Kneeland, \$335<sup>48</sup>/<sub>100</sub>. Mr. Kneeland called himself with the draft to assign his reasons for not paying it which he stated to be errors in the accounts between you relative to which a difference of opinion existed; that he had proposed to leave the accounts to reference, and he now again made the proposition to leave it to reference. He stated he would be quite willing to leave it [to] the writer<sup>1</sup> alone to decide between you or to any person or persons he would appoint. We stated to him that although we should certainly mention his proposition, we must decline a reference to us. At the same time the amount is not large and as friends to both parties we hope you will not be hasty in taking any legal proceedings. It will be costly to both, excites evil feelings, and it is possible both may be in part wrong, although no doubt you both think you are right. In making these remarks we do so from motives of friendship only and without knowing anything of the merits of the points in dispute.

<sup>1</sup> Probably James Brown.

A more detailed account of the several agencies follows:

#### I.—CHARLESTON

**JAMES ADGER**, the founder of the firm which represented Brown, Shipley & Company in Charleston, was an old friend of Alexander Brown, whose acquaintance he had made in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> He was born in 1777 in Money-nick, County Antrim, Ireland. According to his grandson, Mr. Smyth, "he came to this country in 1793,<sup>2</sup> entering the employ of Mr. John Bailey of New York, who was attracted to the boy on the ship coming over by his conduct in a personal difficulty with the sailors. He clerked for Mr. Bailey for several years, coming to Charleston twice on business." Another grandson, Mr. John B. Adger, states that he came to Charleston about 1802, and four years later founded there the firm of James Adger & Company.

Mr. Smyth furnishes the following reminiscences of his grandfather: "James Adger had a line of sailing vessels

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Adger's grandson, John B. Adger, states that his grandfather became acquainted with Alexander Brown, of Baltimore, in 1818. Another grandson, Ellison A. Smyth, writes that he was "under the impression that the friendship between Alexander Brown and James Adger commenced on shipboard when both boys were about sixteen, coming over from Ireland." From a careful examination of letters and documents, I cannot find any evidence that Alexander Brown came to this country as a lad. He may possibly have visited his brother in Baltimore in 1798, but it is certain that it was in 1800 that he left Ireland to make his home permanently in the United States. I have heard my father say many times that Alexander Brown and James Adger were old friends in Ireland. Therefore, I do not think John B. Adger's statement that his grandfather became acquainted with Alexander Brown for the first time in 1818 is correct.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. John B. Adger puts the date of his grandfather's arrival in this country two years later, adding the fact that he brought with him "his widowed mother and [his] brothers and sisters."

that he owned, running between New York and Charleston, and the first four-masted schooner to come into Charleston Harbor was the *Moneynick* owned and named by him. He also started the New York & Charleston Steamship Company, and he was the largest stock-holder and controlled the company. One of the steamers was named *The James Adger*. The first steamer of the line was called the *Southerner*: I have a picture of her, and of her captain—Captain N. Berry—who was the commodore of the line, and commanded every new vessel as it was built. I remember, as a boy, being at my grandfather's house during the summer on Sullivan's Island, the steamers firing a gun opposite the house every time they went in or went out, and dipping their flags, and I also remember the fine beef and fish that were brought down in the steamers for my grandfather. As you know, James Adger owned both North and South Adger's Wharf in Charleston, which were built of granite that was brought from New Hampshire, and when built, somewhere between 1830 and 1840, were called 'Adger's Folly,' as all the other wharves were built of palmetto logs, but after the Civil War, these wharves were in good shape and they were ready for use, whereas the other wharves were in bad shape and unserviceable."

The closeness of the intimacy between Mr. Adger and the Browns appears impressively from the following incident: At the time of the death of James Adger, while on a visit to New York in September, 1858, yellow fever was raging in Charleston, and his remains could not be brought there for interment until late in November of that year. Under these circumstances Mr. James Brown opened his

house for the funeral and made preparation for the care of the body in his own vault until such time as it could be removed to Charleston.<sup>1</sup>

After his father's death, Robert Adger, third son of James Adger, became the head of the firm, and its business was carried on in two separate localities in Charleston and under two different names. The commercial and financial business, under the name of James Adger & Company, was managed by Robert Adger, and the hardware portion of the business, under the name of James E. Adger & Company, was under the special management of Joseph Ellison Adger, his brother.

During the lifetime of Alexander Brown and that of his sons, and until the outbreak of the Civil War, the closest business and friendly relations were kept up between the firms. Foreseeing the disastrous consequences to all business in the South, should war actually break out, Robert Adger was able to save a good part of his fortune and that of his family connection by converting as much as possible into money and remitting it to England to Brown, Shipley & Company, in whose custody it remained until the war was over. After the war Robert Adger became largely interested in water phosphate mining in which he was one of the pioneers, and both he and George Stewart Brown were large stockholders in the Coosaw Mining Company

<sup>1</sup>The "Charleston Courier," September 28th, 1858, notes the fact that "the body of our late venerable merchant and distinguished citizen has been taken to the house of James Brown, of the banking firm of Brown Brothers and Company, and is there laid in state," and October 2d, 1852, the "Charleston Evening News" states, "The remains of the late Mr. Adger were, on Monday, removed from the house of Mr. James Brown to his vault in Second Street Cemetery, where they will remain until after frost, when they will be conveyed to Charleston, probably in the steamer bearing Mr. Adger's own name."

in which Robert Adger was the controlling spirit. The Company acquired from the State of South Carolina the sole right for mining phosphate rock in the streams, navigable rivers and waters of the State, and, until the discovery of phosphates in Florida, earned excellent profits. After the war the Charleston agency was reopened and continued with James Adger & Company until 1879, when it was closed.<sup>1</sup>

## II.—SAVANNAH

**DR. CUMMING**, the agent in Savannah, was a connection by marriage of the Browns of Baltimore. He and Stewart Brown, brother of Alexander Brown, married sisters,<sup>2</sup> and the closest friendly and business relations existed between the two families. Until 1839 he acted for the American and Liverpool houses in Savannah. The closeness of the relation appears from the following letter. On the 15th of November, 1825, just after the establishment of the New York house, James Brown writes to John Cumming & Son:

We are pleased to see that William & James Brown & Company stand so well in your section of the country. That circumstance, with your aid, will no doubt make them some correspondents where particular ties of friendship do not interfere. We have no other correspondents at Savannah but your house, and we do hope our establishment here will enable us when we get known to put some orders your way. We think it probable W. & J. B. & Co. will stand as high or higher here than any other Liverpool house and make us more

<sup>1</sup> The firm of James Adger & Company is still maintained at Belton, South Carolina under the management of John B. Adger, a grandson of the founder.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. John Cumming married, in 1795, Mary Ann, and Stewart married, in 1797, Sarah, daughters of Jacob Harmon, of Philadelphia.



looked to here than under other circumstances. As yet, however, nothing has been done thro' us to any quarter.

Again, on the 28th of December, 1825, Brown Brothers & Company write, introducing the captain of the ship *Marion*: "You will find him a very clever man and so much the man of business its a pleasure to have such to your address." Characteristic is the insertion of purely personal matters in business letters. On the 5th of January, 1826, they write: "We thank you for procuring for us the hominy and are surprised an article so much used is not more plenty." Again, on the 28th of January of the same year, we read: "We have been laid up all this week with the fashionable influenza that goes the rounds, and now Mrs. B. and Mrs. Hunter have their turn and five or six of Mr. Dickey's family are down with it. Indeed, hardly a family escapes." An earlier letter, dated the 6th of January, 1826, states: "The accounts from Manchester are extremely gloomy; the streets full of unemployed manufacturers and symptoms of riot but too evident."

Owing, however, to the smallness of the volume of the business and its unsatisfactory results, it was found necessary to discontinue the arrangement, and John Cumming & Son were succeeded in the autumn of 1839 by Mr. Hamilton, who remained there until 1845, when he was called back to England to enter the Liverpool firm. On Mr. Hamilton's retirement, Charles D. Dickey was transferred in 1846 from New Orleans to Savannah and remained there until the autumn of 1847, when he left to join the agency in Mobile. Thereafter until the Civil War the firm was represented by George Brown Cumming, son of Dr. John Cumming, who had been in business with his

father as his partner. In 1867 business was again resumed in Savannah, and Gourdin, Matthiessen & Company were appointed agents for the purchase of sterling. After the death of Mr. Matthiessen, in 1869, the agency was continued with their successors, H. & R. N. Gourdin & Company. Later, Mr. Henry W. Frost was admitted to the firm, and the name was changed to Gourdins, Young & Frost. After 1873 purchases of exchange in Savannah virtually ceased. The firm in Savannah, however, continued to act for Brown Brothers & Company whenever occasion required, as their successors still do to-day.

### III.—NEW ORLEANS

As already mentioned, the firms had at first no regular agents at either New Orleans or Mobile, but their correspondents in New Orleans were Benjamin Story, Joseph Fowler, Jr., and John Hagan & Company, and in Mobile, McCloskey & Hagan. In a letter of Alexander Brown & Sons in 1822 mention is made of John A. Brown's being in New Orleans, and doubtless there were many other occasions when the younger partners visited both New Orleans and Mobile.

After the panic of 1837 there appears to have been considerable discussion among the brothers about the advisability of establishing branch houses or agencies in the Southern States. March 30, 1838, George writes to his brother James:

There is no use in having a house anywhere in this country, as their portion of profits would be equal to all that would be made, except in New Orleans. There it would be desirable to have one of our partners, as that is the place to get some good business, but it requires a

man of experience and judgment. You know Story is a most excellent, safe and prudent correspondent, but as he keeps no clerks his accounts current are never sent as soon as we would like. We have not yet got his December acct, although promised several times. If we could make an arrangement with Story to give him half of all commissions earned, [keeping] Nicholson or Bowen . . . there 8 months each year, it would be a most advantageous arrangement, as his [Story's] advice and information would be worth a great deal to an active partner.

Your affectionate Brother,

GEORGE BROWN.

It is certain that Mr. Nicholson was in New Orleans in the winters of 1837 and 1838, and William Brown was so impressed with the importance of a visit to this country, and especially to the Southern agents and correspondents, by one of the English partners, that in 1838 he sent Mr. Bowen from Liverpool to spend a year on this side of the Atlantic. He visited New Orleans, where he doubtless met Mr. Nicholson, and also Mobile, and at that time established an agency of the firm in Mobile under his own name. At or about the same time Mr. Nicholson opened a branch house in New Orleans under the name of Samuel Nicholson, which in 1849 was changed to Samuel Nicholson & Company. He resided there (at least during the major part of the winter months) until 1850, returned to New Orleans in the winter intermittently from 1850 until 1852, and then settled permanently in New York till his retirement in 1856. While absent from New Orleans he left the management of the business (still under the firm name of Samuel Nicholson & Company) to Andrew B. Morrell and Thomas Vowell,<sup>1</sup> with power to sign jointly for the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Morrell was an old employee of the firm, and Mr. Vowell a relative of Stewart Brown.

firm. Owing to a disagreement, Thomas Vowell retired in 1858, and Samuel Nicholson & Company then intrusted the signature to Andrew B. Morrell alone. At that time the firm occupied offices in a large banking building, at the corner of Canal Street and Exchange Place, which was subsequently sold to the Bank of America when the office was removed to 33 Carondelet Street.

In 1858 occurred one of the worst yellow-fever epidemics, a disease common to New Orleans in those early years, the outbreak being of exceedingly virulent type and difficult to understand or manage. The daily mortality was large, and the detriment to business great. At times business wholly ceased, all ingress to and egress from the city being prohibited by the stringent local country quarantine.

In 1859, owing to a change in the Louisiana law forbidding the use of a deceased person's name in the title of a firm, the firm name in New Orleans was changed from Samuel Nicholson & Company to Brown & Company, and as Mr. Morrell was obliged to go North every summer, to avoid the danger of yellow fever, power to sign was also given jointly to Charles F. Hoffman and George W. Lee. Soon after, the firm name was changed to Brown Brothers & Company, and so remained until the opening of the Civil War, when, owing to threats of violence from the Confederate war mob in 1861, the office was suddenly closed. Mr. Morrell returned to New York and entered the office there. The books were saved by Mr. Hoffman and concealed in his barn until, under instructions from Brown Brothers & Company, he shipped them to New

York upon the capture of the city in 1862 by Federal troops.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Hoffman himself remained in New Orleans, re-entering the service of Alexander and John Dennistoun & Company as manager, in whose employment he had been before he joined Mr. Nicholson. He continued in their service until 1870, when they decided to close their New Orleans house, and he then joined William F. Halsey.

At the close of the war, in 1865, the agency at New Orleans was again opened under the management of Messrs. John Witherspoon and William F. Halsey, under the firm name of Witherspoon & Halsey. Mr. Witherspoon was a resident of the South and a relative of Mrs. Charles D. Dickey, and Mr. Halsey had been brought up as a boy in the New York office, where for many years he had had charge of the Commercial Exchange desk. He was specially qualified for this new position, as he had a most wonderful memory and an accurate knowledge of the leading acceptors of commercial bills in Great Britain and the Continent.

In 1867, Henry Goldthwaite, a nephew of Mrs. Charles D. Dickey, joined the firm, residing in Mobile, and the firm there became Halsey, Goldthwaite & Company, and, in New Orleans, Witherspoon, Halsey & Company, Mr.

<sup>1</sup> When examining these old papers in 1864, before destroying them, the writer found a bundle of letters indorsed in Mr. Nicholson's handwriting. They had been taken from the office safe at New Orleans and proved to be the correspondence between Mr. Nicholson and his wife at the time of their engagement. They had evidently been put carefully away in this safe by Mr. Nicholson when he left New Orleans. As both Mr. and Mrs. Nicholson had died and left no children, the letters were destroyed. Mrs. Nicholson was a beautiful woman whose maiden name was Helen Gibbs Kane, a most gracious hostess and a brilliant conversationalist.



**Mr. William F. Halsey  
Mr. Charles F. Hoffman**

**Mr. James M. Brown Jr.,  
Mr. William Harmon Brown**

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Halsey passing his time between Mobile and New Orleans. On October 6, 1869, Mr. Witherspoon retired, and in January, 1870, Charles F. Hoffman joined Mr. Halsey in New Orleans, and the firm became Halsey & Goldthwaite in New Orleans, and Goldthwaite & Company in Mobile.

In 1873, Mr. Goldthwaite retired, and the agency in Mobile was closed. Mr. Halsey continued in New Orleans with Mr. Hoffman under his own name, W. F. Halsey, until 1887, when he was called to the New York office to take charge of the purchase and sale of sterling exchange, which had heretofore been managed by Mr. Johnson. He held this position until his death on May 8, 1891.

Mr. Hoffman continued in charge in New Orleans until January, 1891, when, at the request of Messrs. Dickey and Potter, he was called to a permanent position in New York, where he had already resided temporarily during the summers of 1889 and 1890.<sup>1</sup> The New Orleans agency was continued for two years longer under Mr. Hoffman's oversight and responsibility, and was finally closed in November, 1893, owing to the resignation of the manager in charge, and the concentration of the exchange business in New York.

Of his connection with the agency, Mr. Hoffman writes, October 24, 1906:

Looking back at this distance of time it is a pleasure and satisfaction to recall the Agency's long period of pleasant relations with its principals in New York and abroad, and the prosperous career that marked its existence. Especially during the years immediately fol-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hoffman had previously rendered a similar service in Philadelphia in the summer of 1877.



lowing the restoration of peace in 1865 were its transactions of heavy volume and unusual profit, as the local Banks came out of the War period in an impoverished condition, and the facilities furnished by the Agency, through means of the unlimited funds placed at its disposal by Brown Brothers & Company, of New York, for moving the annual cotton crops, were greatly appreciated by the business community, and expressions of regret at its discontinuance were common.<sup>1</sup>

#### IV. MOBILE

UNTIL after the panic of 1837 the business of the firms in Mobile was attended to by their correspondents, McCloskey and Hagan, who acted in that capacity as late as 1827 and probably much later, though from the old records I am not able to settle this point definitely.

When Mr. Bowen visited Mobile in 1838, he established an agency there under his own name, and this continued until 1840. It is probable that Mr. Bowen, who never returned to Liverpool, but became a partner in Philadelphia in June, 1839, after the retirement of John A. Brown, kept the oversight of the Mobile Agency, visiting it at intervals in the winter until 1840, when George Cleveland, Jr., was selected for the place, which he held until 1847. In writing to Joseph Shipley under date of November 16, 1842, in reference to a report from Captain Leeds that Mr. Cleveland was not liked in Mobile, Mr. Bowen says: "I lived three winters as you know with him, and I do not believe an honester man lives. He is *devoted* to our interest, and it is my impression that he is generally liked. No man can be very popular in

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hoffman completed fifty years of service with the firm on June 1, 1908. He died on April 9, 1909.

Mobile unless he jumps with the views of the class doing business there, a majority of whom are not entitled to any credit of themselves, and owe what they have to their connections. I do not believe we could find as good an agent; I am sure not a better one.

Again, writing to Mr. Shipley, under date of July 12, 1843, introducing Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland, Mr. Bowen says: "My very dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland, go out by this steamer. You will find him a very honest fellow, though his first appearance may not strike you as very prepossessing."

In September, 1847, Andrew Brown Morrell and Charles Denston Dickey succeeded Mr. Cleveland and continued in the management of the agency until June, 1852, when Mr. Dickey became sole agent and acted in that capacity until the autumn of 1859. Mr. Morrell, as already stated, was an old employee of the firm, and was afterward associated with Mr. Nicholson in New Orleans. It is probable that he was with Mr. Nicholson at a much earlier date, and that after 1847 he divided his time between New Orleans and Mobile until 1852, when he left Mr. Dickey in full charge and returned permanently to New Orleans.

Mr. Dickey was a relative of James Brown. He entered the New York office as a youth, on January 1, 1835. A week before he had dined with Mr. Brown in Leonard Street at the usual family gathering on Christmas Day. After serving the firm for several years as cashier, in 1844 or 1845, at Mr. Nicholson's request, he went out to New Orleans as general manager of the New Orleans office, and after Mr. Hamilton returned to Liverpool to

enter the house as a partner, he was sent to Savannah, in 1846, to take charge of the agency there. In 1847, he was transferred to Mobile.

It is worth recording, as bringing out a marked characteristic of James Brown, that before young Mr. Dickey left New York for Savannah, Mr. Brown called him into his private office, and after wishing him "Good-bye" and "Good luck," said in his quick, nervous way, "Charles, you leave us with our entire confidence, but if you speculate, you lose it." I do not recall the exact words, but the warning was so characteristic of my father's attitude toward all forms of speculation by young men in confidential positions, and I have heard him repeat a similar warning so often, that it has left a lasting impression on my mind. It is needless to say it also made a profound impression on Mr. Dickey, who, with many opportunities for making money, even in a legitimate way, in the purchase of cotton, was never, while he represented Brown Brothers & Company, interested in a single bale on his own account.

After serving the firm for sixteen years as agent, Mr. Dickey became a partner in 1859, with residence in New York, and, at the suggestion of Mr. Hamilton, his place in Mobile was taken by Herman Hoskier, at that time residing in Liverpool and an intimate friend of Stewart Henry Brown, one of the junior partners of the Liverpool firm. Mr. Dickey remained in Mobile up to the autumn and part of the winter of 1859, in order to start Mr. Hoskier in his new field. On the 6th of December, 1859, Mr. Hoskier writes: "J'ai commencé mon apprentissage dans un bon moment. Nous avons fait pour quatre ou

cinq millions de francs d'affaires pendant la semaine dernière, et comme notre commis était malade, Monsieur Dickey et moi avons eu les mains pleines et j'ai travaillé très tard."

Mr. Hoskier remained at his post in Mobile until June, 1861, after the outbreak of the Civil War, and succeeded, not without anxiety and some danger, in clearing the port and nearly the whole State of the balance of the year's cotton crop, making a large sum in Exchange, consigning some 30,000 bales of cotton to Brown, Shipley & Company in Liverpool for sale. He left Mobile in June. The journey north was a very arduous one through the military lines, but he arrived safely in New York with wife and child, and left shortly for England. He remained some time in the Liverpool office, and became a partner in the house in 1866, with residence in London.

At the close of the war business in Mobile was again resumed, A. J. Ingersoll & Company representing the firm there from 1865 to July 1, 1867. In November, 1867, Halsey, Goldthwaite & Company, a branch house of the firm acting as agents in New Orleans, were appointed agents. They were succeeded by Goldthwaite & Company in October, 1869, and in 1873 the Agency was closed.

As the season for the export of cotton closed in the early summer, and as the principal agents of the firm in both New Orleans and Mobile were Northern men and not immune from yellow fever, then more prevalent than now, they usually passed that season with their families, either in the North, or sometimes in England. They

thus kept themselves in constant touch with the partners both in New York and Liverpool. The journey, however, between the North and South, especially with families of young children, was very tedious and oftentimes dangerous. The more usual course was by steamer to Charleston or Savannah, thence by stage (later by rail) to Montgomery, then down the Alabama River to Mobile, and thence to New Orleans. The journey to New York from New Orleans often occupied more than a week. The long land journey by stage from the sea-coast to Montgomery, occupying one or two nights, was very trying. The hotels were poor, and the food as a general rule execrable, except in the larger towns and on the steamboats. When the river was low the boats, though drawing very little water, often ran aground on sandbanks, over which they were "jumped." Great poles were lashed diagonally to the sides with their ends pointing forward, and when the engines were started, the poles lifted the boats bodily over the obstruction. At times, however, this device failed and there were long and vexatious delays, while the passengers waited for the river to rise.

A few years after the war the business of the agencies grew less and less, and, with the exception of New Orleans, they ceased to be important factors in the transactions of the firm. The rapid and improved railway communication between the North and the South, the shortening of the time for the transit of the mails and the almost universal use of the telegraph by merchants and bankers more and more concentrated the market for exchange in New York, and there was no longer any need

to maintain an agent in the Southern ports to secure a good supply of commercial bills. They could be purchased in New York through brokers at almost the same rates as by our own agents, and in addition, for a very slight advance in price, they often carried a bank endorsement. The agencies therefore came to a natural end, and one after the other was abandoned. New Orleans was continued longer than the others, and for a long time there were earnest discussions among the partners both in New York and England about the advisability of strengthening and maintaining the agency there; but after a careful examination of the field it was found that unless it should be so enlarged and strengthened that the house there could compete for a share of the good local business of the place and adjoining country,—a policy which would have required not only additional capital, but also in all probability, the presence of a resident partner—it would not pay to maintain it solely as a centre for the purchase of sterling exchange. As the business of the firms, both in the North and in London, was constantly increasing, and demanded all the time and strength of the partners, it was determined to abandon that field and to concentrate more and more in New York and adjacent cities, which were in daily and hourly contact with the head office.

## CHAPTER XVI

### PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

#### CHANGES IN BUSINESS METHODS WHICH HAVE PASSED UNDER THE WRITER'S OBSERVATION.

**A**S the writer has been a partner since 1864, his term of service covers in great measure the time of the transition from the older to the newer methods of business both here and abroad. When he entered the Liverpool office, in 1860, there was no cable communication between the two countries, and the mail service was bi-weekly, and in winter oftentimes only weekly. The ordinary passage between Liverpool and New York took from ten to eleven days in summer, and twelve to fourteen in winter—sometimes even sixteen to eighteen. It was often a month before the American houses could hear of the arrival and acceptance of their remittances. Such an aid in a business office as a stenographer or typewriter was unknown, and it was only because of a complaint from the Liverpool house of the illegibility of the writer's letters<sup>1</sup> that, in 1879, as a concession to his infirmity, a single stenographer was allowed. Until 1885, only one stenographer was employed in the New York office, and there was not one in the English offices. The first type-writing machine was introduced in the New York office,

<sup>1</sup> In early life he suffered from writer's cramp.



**Mr. John Crosby Brown**



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in 1885, as an experiment, and met with little favor from the older partners. At the earnest solicitation of the writer, the first woman stenographer was employed in 1897. Since that time the number of stenographers and type-writers has steadily increased, and at present in the New York office alone there are four men and twelve women in that department. All office letters and, with few exceptions, all private letters are dictated and type-written, and no head of a department is allowed to waste his time in writing letters with his own hand. The same change has taken place in all the offices, although the introduction of type-written letters in the London office occurred at a much later date.

Up to the time of the Civil War, and indeed until the establishment of regular telegraphic communication by cable, the business of the firm had been confined within very strict limits. Purchase and sale of sterling exchange, advances against cotton and other produce from Southern and other ports of the United States consigned to the Liverpool firm for sale, granting of credits to merchants for the importation of goods from all parts of the world, and the issuance of circular letters of credit to travellers, formed the major part of the business.

It was one of the maxims of the older members of the firm, before the writer became a partner, that the distinction between domestic and foreign banking should be strictly maintained. It was for this reason that in the older days deposit accounts from domestic concerns were discouraged, in fact rarely received, and as far as possible all purely domestic banking business was declined. The only deposit accounts of any moment on the books

of the firm at the time I became a partner were from concerns engaged in foreign business. My father used to say that deposits from domestic concerns were a poor reliance for a foreign banker, for in an active money market money needed for foreign purposes was always drawn out for home use.

The course of exchange for years before the Civil War was mainly affected by the condition of the crops (chiefly the cotton crop) and by the magnitude and volume of the exports and imports. Stock Exchange transactions on foreign account were of moderate amount, and had little effect on the foreign exchange market. During the spring and summer, when there was little cotton for export, exchange would usually be high, and low during the fall and winter, when cotton was freely shipped. It was customary, therefore, when exchange was high, to draw very largely upon the Liverpool house and to use the money in New York to discount good mercantile paper falling due in autumn and winter. The paper discounted was largely that of Southern merchants, which usually commanded very high rates. In the autumn and winter, when exchange was low, the process was reversed; large amounts were bought, not only with the proceeds of the paper discounted, but also by borrowing largely from banks. The exchange account was seldom balanced to a point, except at the end of the year, and I have heard my father say that the profit of the exchange business was usually disappointing. The daily exchange operations were based on a margin of profit of from  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent., sometimes 1 per cent. The net profit, however, was always less than anticipated, seldom more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  per

cent.—a result very satisfactory if it could be obtained at the present time, but disappointing then. The losses in notes discounted, and the slow payment of Southern paper, which oftentimes involved loss of interest, wiped out a good part of the supposed margin for profit.

With the outbreak of the Civil War and the suspension of specie payment, all this was changed. It was no longer safe to leave exchange transactions uncovered from day to day. No one could tell what the premium on gold would be within the next twenty-four hours. Indeed it is hard for one who has not lived through those days to understand the difficulty with which all foreign business was transacted. Quotations for exchange were always given both in gold and currency. If the buyer elected to pay in currency, it was necessary at once to cover the transaction by the purchase of gold, and the fluctuations were so rapid and so constant that it was almost impossible to avoid serious loss. Year by year the premium on gold advanced, and with it, of course, the quotations in currency. The highest prices for both gold and sterling in currency were reached in the summer of 1864, and on July 13, a good line of our sixty-day bills on Liverpool was sold in currency at 306, and some of these bills bought back again a few days later at fifteen or twenty points less. This extreme rate lasted but a short time.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This quotation is according to the old method (explained on page 283), and represented a premium on gold of about 172 per cent. With exchange for gold at 109½ and gold at a premium of 172, say 272, the exact equivalent quotation in currency would be 298½. The difference between 298½ and 306, 7½ points, extreme as it may seem now, represented then only a fair margin to cover the risk in the sudden fluctuations of gold before a purchase could be made. Gold reached its highest premium, 185 per cent., say 285, on July 11, 1864.

The older method of working the exchange account had therefore to be abandoned. A new system was adopted. All exchange transactions were covered each day as nearly as possible, and at the end of each week the account was balanced to a point. Indeed, an entirely new system of office accounts was adopted, which did much to carry the firm through those days of depreciated currency safely and without undue anxiety. As the major part of the firm's obligations was in sterling, all transactions of the American houses were reduced each month to a gold basis; all salaries and expenses, all losses incurred and profits realized, were drawn for or remitted every month from or to the English house, and thus all danger of depreciation was avoided. This was at first highly gratifying to the clerks and employees who, in the earlier years of the war, received increasing salaries in currency, but it worked disaster to them in the end, as the premium on gold during the war was generally greater than the increased cost of living, which, however, did not follow the premium on gold in its decline. It was several years before the employees of the firm could get rid of the extravagant habits engendered by the high salaries in currency paid during the war. Indeed they did not secure real relief until a general advance in salaries was made. The cost of living, even after the resumption of specie payments in 1879, never fell back to prices current before the war.

By an act of Congress, passed March 3, 1873, to take effect January 1, 1874, a change was made by the Treasury Department in computing the value of a sovereign or pound sterling, which resulted in a complete change in

the method which had heretofore obtained in quoting sterling exchange.<sup>1</sup>

Up to January 1, 1874, sterling exchange was quoted at a premium from the fictitious or arbitrary par established in Colonial times—say, \$4.44 to the pound sterling. The gold par of exchange—that is, the mint value of a sovereign represented in dollars, say, \$4.8665 to the pound—was expressed by a premium of about 9½ per cent. from this fictitious par. Importers had become so accustomed to this method of quoting exchange that for months after the adoption of the new system exchange dealers were obliged to give quotations in both ways. The new method soon grew in favor and had a very marked effect in reducing the margin between buyer and seller. We often had great difficulty in explaining that a difference of one cent in the rate was not a difference of one per cent., but about one-fifth of one per cent. From Colonial times also the law governing transactions in exchange provided that if a sterling bill was protested for non-payment the bona-fide holder had the right to collect 10 per cent. damages from the drawer as well as

<sup>1</sup> The Act of Congress of the United States, of March 3, 1873, Chapter 96, Section 2, provides:

“That in all payments by or to the treasury, whether made here or in foreign countries, where it becomes necessary to compute the value of the sovereign or pound sterling, it shall be deemed equal to four dollars eighty-six cents and six and one-half mills, and the same rule shall be applied in appraising merchandise imported where the value is, by the invoice, in sovereigns or pounds sterling, and in the construction of contracts payable in sovereigns or pounds sterling; and this valuation shall be the par of exchange between Great Britain and the United States; and all contracts made after the first day of January, eighteen hundred and seventy-four, based on an assumed par of exchange with Great Britain of fifty-four pence to the dollar, or four dollars forty-four and four ninths cents to the sovereign or pound sterling shall be null and void.”

the face value of the bill. This law remained in force until 1897, although for many years before its repeal the 10 per cent. damages were rarely exacted except in cases of fraud.

In early days entirely different principles governed the agents of Baring Brothers & Company and ourselves in opening commercial credits. I have often heard my father tell of earnest discussions on this subject between himself and his friend Samuel Ward, the agent of the Barings in New York, and a very able man. He insisted upon granting credits only to merchants who gave him all their business, men of such large means and established credit that he could, in most cases, safely intrust the consignment of goods shipped under credits to the merchants themselves. In that way he said he could know whether a firm was doing more business than its capital justified, and, if so, curtail its line of credits or close its account. In such cases, of course, the amounts at stake with any one firm must necessarily be very large and, in case of failure, the loss excessive.

My father, on the contrary, contended that it was safer to limit the amount of credit given to any one firm, however good, and in all cases to have the goods remain under his control until they reached this country, and then to deliver to the merchant such an amount as his credit at that time warranted. In that way, in case of failure, the loss with any one firm would be more moderate and never likely to prove serious. He likened the credit business to the insurance business, in which it was essential to limit the amount of any one risk. For many years the two firms pursued these two opposite methods, but

with the advent of rapid communication and international cables neither could any longer be strictly adhered to. The volume of business of many concerns is such that no one firm can handle the whole of it, and on the other hand it is no longer always possible for the banker to keep control of the goods until arrival in this country.

Formerly settlements by merchants with their bankers under credits were made at the banker's posted rate for sixty-day bills, or, if the rate was not satisfactory to the importer, he was at liberty to hand in a sixty-day bill endorsed by his own firm on one of five leading firms. These firms were Brown Brothers & Company, Baring Brothers & Company, N. M. Rothschild & Sons, W. C. Pickersgill & Company, and the Bank of British North America.<sup>1</sup> Any other banker's bill offered could be declined or received only as a matter of courtesy, but, of course, with the increase of business between the two countries and the establishment of new agencies here by the London banks, and of new and wealthy firms engaged in foreign business, this practice ceased.

I can recall but one period during the forty-eight years that I have been connected with the concern, when there was any really serious difference of opinion between the partners in England and the United States. While the result of this difference was the loss of some prestige in New York, and of a very handsome profit on both sides of the Atlantic, the wisdom of the old principle laid down by Alexander Brown, which had been adhered to faithfully by his sons—never to enter upon any business which

<sup>1</sup>This, of course, was custom, not law, and gradually the number of firms and banks where 60-day bills were accepted was increased.



did not meet the general approval of all the partners—carried the firm safely over a serious difficulty. As is well known, the Civil War often found friends and families on opposite sides, some favoring the South and some the North. I have already referred in Chapter VII to the divergent views of the partners in Liverpool and New York after the outbreak of the war about the proper course to be pursued in view of the proclamation of neutrality issued by Great Britain, and how the difficulties were adjusted mainly through the intervention of James Brown and a visit of Mr. Hamilton to the United States. One other instance deserves mention. With the exception of Sir William Brown, then quite an old man, and my cousin, Stewart Henry Brown, one of the junior partners, the active partners in Liverpool, in common with the Liverpool merchants generally, had little idea that the North would ultimately succeed. When the first public subscription to United States bonds was asked for, the New York house, then under the management of Stewart Brown, as James Brown was abroad, subscribed largely and as a matter of course to the new loan. Strong objection, however, was made to this investment by the Liverpool partners on the ground that it was locking up, in a security entirely unsalable in England, and likely to be unsalable for a time even in the United States, money which ought to be kept in a liquid shape, available to meet outstanding obligations in sterling. James Brown, on the other hand, contended that a failure to take an interest in a Government loan in a time of great national peril might subject the firm to severe criticism, and that as long as the investment was kept

within moderate limits no harm would follow. As, however, the investment was at that time outside of the firm's ordinary line of business, and the objection of the Liverpool partners on that account was sound, the bonds were sold. I never admired the self-restraint and the wisdom of my father more than on that occasion. He could, of course, have carried his point with his brother, and the partners in Liverpool would have had to acquiesce, but it would have been a departure from the old principle, "Shoemaker, stick to your last." The result was an increase of the mutual confidence and respect of the members of the firms, such as nothing else could have effected, for the partners in Liverpool had later to admit that they were entirely in the wrong.

As I have already stated, up to the time of the Civil War the firm had confined itself almost entirely to certain restricted lines of business, but with the opening up of more rapid communication with the Old World first by steamers and then by cable, and the increase in competition for foreign business, very largely on the part of domestic banks and bankers, it became evident that, if the firm was to hold its own, new lines of business must be sought and cultivated. It was, therefore, at the earnest solicitation of Howard Potter and the writer that the firm began to equip itself for more varied operations, and to build up a conservative investment business. More office room was required, and owing to the failure of the tenants who occupied the north-western corner of the building, that space was added in 1885. Our establishments in Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore were connected by a private wire, which was in-

stalled about July 1st of the same year, and in July, 1891, long-distance telephone communication was introduced. In 1899 a private telephone exchange was established, and through it the desks in our different offices were connected. These are essentials in any well-equipped modern office, adding, however, greatly to the wear and tear of business life. In 1899, when the telephone exchange was first put into our office, the number of calls was approximately 76,337; in 1908, it had increased to 236,863.<sup>1</sup>

During the first ten or twelve years after the introduction of the private wire, telegraph messages averaged about 6,000 per year, with the exception of one year when there was a special piece of business on hand in Philadelphia. In 1898, the number of messages was about 15,000; since then there has been an increase each year, and the total in 1908 was about 56,000.

It further became necessary to adopt more modern methods of accounting, to abandon the old method of recording all transactions in books in long hand, and to substitute, as far as possible, printed forms with blanks to be filled, so diminishing work in keeping the records. The departments in the office were divided and subdivided, each with its respective head, and the records of original entries were kept by these departments, totals

	<sup>1</sup> 1899	1908
Calls sent .....	10,954	54,382
Calls received .....	18,800 approx.	109,749
Interior calls .....	12,600	72,732
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total, 6½ mo .....	42,354	.....
Rate per year .....	76,337	236,863

only being entered in the cash-book of the day. This change was made in 1885, and resulted in eliminating from our cash-books page upon page of writing, and in lessening greatly the liability to error.

Similar methods were adopted in the other American offices, and also in London, and by the use of printed forms and other mechanical devices, original entries were, as far as possible, made permanent records of the firm's transactions, thereby not only materially diminishing the expense of conducting the business, but also avoiding the liability of error resulting from frequent copying.

## CHAPTER XVII

### CONCLUSION

#### GENERAL REFLECTIONS SUGGESTED BY THE PRECEDING HISTORY.

**O**NE cannot read this brief record of the past without noticing certain marked characteristics of the founders of the firm and their immediate successors, upon which it may be well to dwell for a moment. Living under different systems of government to which they were loyally attached, belonging to different branches of the Christian Church, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Church of England, Society of Friends, and sincerely devoted to these various bodies, they nevertheless lived in perfect harmony, respecting one another's views and sympathizing in one another's efforts to promote the general welfare. They were God-fearing men, and, without any assumption of superiority, maintained in the most unobtrusive way a high standard of integrity in all their business relations. They were not especially concerned to amass great fortunes, and, indeed, according to modern standards, they were not very rich. Their ambition was rather to lead simple lives, to attend to their business without ostentation, and to devote a good part of their leisure to the various public, religious and philanthropic institutions with which they were connected, and to which they gave

liberally of their time and money. I have already mentioned the fact that until 1868 the ownership and control of the firm was with Alexander Brown, and after his death with his sons. Although their power was absolute, I know of but one occasion when the propriety of their action in any important matter was ever questioned, and that only by the person specially interested, all others approving the fairness of the decision. The confidence and respect of all the junior members of the firm for the seniors is a striking testimony to their reputation for liberal and fair dealing, and was doubtless increased in great measure by their action in times of financial difficulty. From the records of the firm it appears that the brothers were in the habit, in bad years, of assuming losses that would impair the capital of their junior partners, and this practice was continued as late as 1857. As an example of liberal treatment of this kind I add some extracts from an agreement entered into between the partners in reference to the losses incurred through the panic of 1837.

ARTICLES of AGREEMENT entered into between WILLIAM BROWN of Liverpool, JAMES BROWN of New York of the first part, and JOSEPH SHIPLEY of Liverpool, STEWART BROWN of New York, SAMUEL NICHOLSON of New Orleans, and WILLIAM E. BOWEN of Philadelphia of the second part.

*First.*—WHEREAS, it appears that the old debts due to our respective firms (many of them contracted in 1837), turning out from year to year much worse than our estimates, having brought one of the parties of the Second part, WILLIAM E. BOWEN, in debt to the firm the sum of \$21,549.85 and reduced the Capital of the other three parties of the Second part, MR. JOSEPH SHIPLEY, MR. STEWART BROWN and MR. SAMUEL NICHOLSON in proportion to their greater number of Shares, said reduction being \$127,572.75.

*Second.*—Now in consideration of good feeling towards the parties of the second part the parties of the first part have consented that the above sums should be transferred to the Credit of the parties of the second part as Cash, 30 November, 1842, the amount being placed to the debit of the parties of the first part.

*Third.*—The parties of the first part also agree to hold the parties of the second part free from any further loss which may arise on the assets belonging to BROWN BROTHERS & Co. and BROWNS & BOWEN on the 30th November 1842 as per their Balance Sheets, if on a final close of the whole, the loss proves greater than the sum reserved on 30 November 1842 as shewn by their A/c of Profit & Loss, but if on the other hand, there should appear to be a gain in collecting these accounts taken altogether and not separately, an Interest A/c being kept with them all, productive and unproductive at the rate of 6 per cent per Annum, such gain to be treated as earned Profits, and to be divided as such, under our Articles of Partnership.

*Seventh.*—It is further mutually agreed, that if any difference of opinion should arise in the Construction of this agreement, or adjustment of any of the accounts, that the same shall be submitted to Mr. John A. Brown of Philadelphia and Mr. George Brown of Baltimore or either of them, and their decision or the decision of either of them in the matter shall be final and conclusive.

Another marked characteristic of the firm deserves special notice because to it is due in very large measure the firm's continuance for more than a century without any break or serious difference of opinion, with the single exception, as mentioned in Chapter VII, in connection with the Civil War. Of the forty-seven partners, including the members of the firm of Alexander Brown & Sons, all but seven received their training in the home offices or agencies of the firm, and thirty-two<sup>1</sup> were either direct

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Brown, Senior, is not included in this number.

descendants of, or closely allied by marriage to, a partner. Almost every one, therefore, who became a partner grew up in the atmosphere of the firm and early became familiar with its traditions. This practice is, of course, liable to abuse and may lead to incompetent and out-of-date management; but the strict and impartial application of the requirement that a partner's son must serve a sufficiently long apprenticeship and demonstrate his capability before being admitted to the firm is a sufficient guarantee against any evil results. No better example of the fair application of this principle can be adduced than the action of James Brown in reference to two of his three sons who became partners. The health of one of these failed and he could no longer be of service to the firm; the other disliked the confinement of work in an office. Both retired from the firm.

Confidence, absolute confidence, at first between the father and sons, later between the brothers, and later still between the partners, in the different cities and countries, especially at a time when there was no Atlantic cable and communication by mail was slow and infrequent, was the corner-stone of the success of the house in the early days.

This leads me to speak of what I conceive to be the one serious mistake made by partners on both sides of the Atlantic in the later years of our history, those succeeding the Civil War, a mistake which I am glad to say is being corrected at the present time and the avoidance of which is necessary for the future well-being of the concern. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the two most important working partners of the Liverpool and London houses made but one brief visit to the United States after entering



the firm. This was before 1862. Both of these gentlemen had been in active business here before 1851. Their ideas about the country were, therefore, more or less influenced by their knowledge of conditions existing during their residence. They were not, of course, conscious of this, but it was evident to all who came into personal contact with them in later days that they had no adequate conception of the changes, both material and commercial, that were constantly taking place. It was often difficult, and at times impossible, for them to realize the increase of wealth in the country and the stability of the business concerns with which they were dealing. Undoubtedly the firm suffered from this cause. Safe opportunities for profitable business were passed by, and others better posted reaped a rich harvest in which the firm would have shared. On the other hand, although the working partners in New York were constantly visiting England and the Continent, few of them ever spent sufficient time in the Liverpool and London offices to become familiar with English men and methods of business. Difficult questions, therefore, that a few moments of personal intercourse, or a fair knowledge of English usage—to be gained only on the spot—would have cleared up, led to endless and often unprofitable correspondence. No international business can now be conducted with any degree of success without a constant interchange of partners, not for visits of pleasure, merely, valuable as these are, but for actual residence in the offices of the respective countries.

Many other valuable lessons can be drawn from this brief record, but the memory that has left the strongest impression upon me, as a result of my personal contact

with the men who have passed away, and the one which I would like to leave with those who are to follow, is that of a nice sense of commercial honor, an absolute fairness in all dealings, a willingness to suffer pecuniary loss, if need be, rather than tarnish by one unworthy act the good name of the firm. I have known instances where unfair losses have been quietly assumed rather than that there should be any appearance of repudiating an obligation by a mere technicality or subterfuge. Character was prized more than wealth, and it brought its great reward in happy, useful lives.

I cannot more fittingly bring to a close this record of a century of merchant banking carried on by the members of one family and by the partners intimately associated with them by ties of marriage or of warm friendly association during four successive generations, than by quoting in full the quaint phrases addressed by the ancient Company of Founders of the City of London to their apprentices: <sup>1</sup>

You shall constantly and devoutly every Day, Morning and Evening, on your knees, serve GOD, attending at the publick service of the Church, and hearing of the Word preached, and endeavour the right Practice thereof in your life and conversation: You shall be diligent and faithful in your Master's Service during the time of your Apprenticeship, and deal truly in what you shall be trusted: You shall often read over the Covenants of your INDENTURE, together with these INSTRUCTIONS, and endeavour to perform the same to the utmost in your power: You shall avoid all evil Company, and all Occasions which may tend or draw you to the same: and make speedy Return when you shall be sent on your Master's and Mistress's

<sup>1</sup> The company which gave its name to Founders' Court, the site of our principal London office.

**Errands:** You shall avoid Idleness, and be ever employed in God's service, or about your Master's business: You shall be of fair, gentle, and lowly Speech and Behaviour to all Men, and especially to your Governors: and avoid all manner of Gaming, Cursing, Swearing, and Drunkenness; and according to your Carriage, you must expect your Good or Evil from God and your Friends.

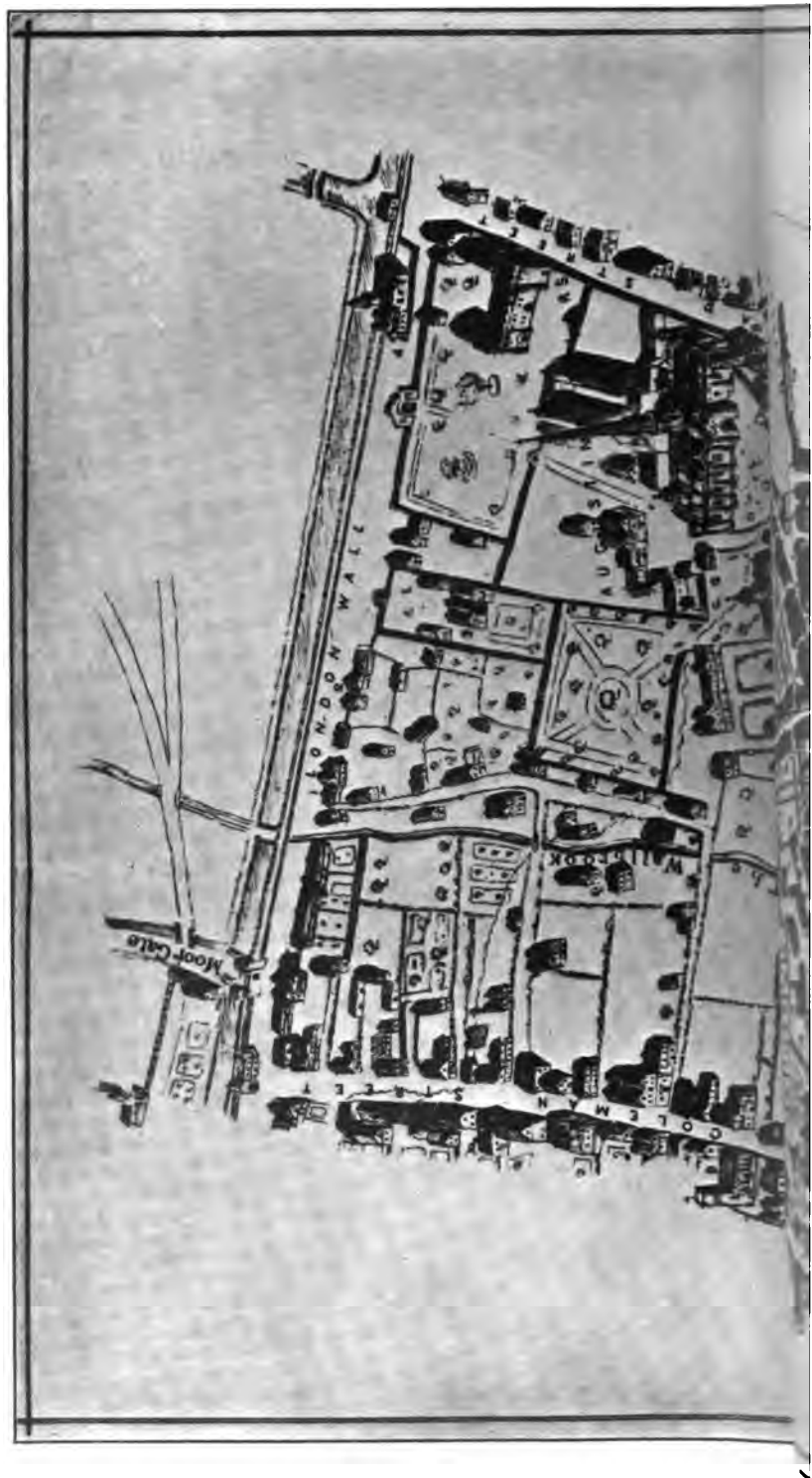
The homely practical wisdom of these words has found repeated illustration in the lives of those whose story has filled the preceding pages, and the wish has been expressed by one of my partners that copies of them might be placed upon the walls of each of our present offices for the instruction of the generations following. In this wish I heartily concur.

## APPENDICES

- I. THE HISTORY OF THE FOUNDERS' COMPANY  
AND THEIR HALL.
- II. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF THE EARLY PART-  
NERS.
- III. TABLES SHOWING THE LENGTH OF SERVICE OF  
THE DIFFERENT MEMBERS OF THE ALLIED  
FIRMS.









- 1 *Armourers' Hall.*
- 2 *Leather Sellers' Hall.*
- 3 *Carpenters' Hall.*
- 4 *Allhallows in the Wall.*
- 5 *S<sup>t</sup> Peter's le Poor.*
- 6 *Drapers' Hall.*
- 7 *S<sup>t</sup> Margaret's, Lothbury.*

**8. FOUNDERS' HALL.**

- 9 *S<sup>t</sup> Stephens, Coleman Street.*
- 10 *Grocers' Hall.*
- 11 *S<sup>t</sup> Mildreds, Poultry.*
- 12 *S<sup>t</sup> Christopher's Stocks.*
- 13 *S<sup>t</sup> Bartholomew's.*
- 14 *S<sup>t</sup> Benet Fink.*
- 15 *Merchants Tailors Hall.*

Old Map Showing the Position of Founders' Hall



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## I

### THE HISTORY OF THE FOUNDERS' COMPANY AND THEIR HALL

I AM indebted to my partner, Mr. Edward Clifton Brown, for the following information about the old Founders' Company and its hall:<sup>1</sup>

In the first place, the motto of the old Founders' Company is "God the only Founder," and the first mention of this Company is found in the archives of the Corporation of London, A. D. 1365, when application was made for ordinances by the Master and Wardens, thus proving that the origin of the Company must be of even earlier date.

In 1363, in the reign of Edward III, it was ordained "that all artificers and people of mysteries shall each choose his own mystery before the next Candelmas, and having so chosen it he shall henceforth use no other."

The Founders apparently never took any part in the passing turmoils or political struggles of these early days, and appear as a corporate body to have endeavoured to perform their own prescribed duties in relieving their poorer brethren, in settling disputes, and punishing dishonest members of the trade. Their business was chiefly in brass and brass candlesticks, and one of the most important duties of the Founders' Company was to check all weights and measures used in London. The first intimation, however, that we have of this is in 1584 when considerable alarm and distrust had arisen from the loss of the legal standards, and the Founders' Company were made responsible for the standard weights and measures, and "no persons

<sup>1</sup> The facts which follow are taken from the "Annals of the Founders' Company," lent to Mr. Brown by the present clerk, Arthur Hughes. These Annals were presented to the Founders' Company by a certain William Meade Williams in 1867, and were printed privately.

were able to buy or sell except with true weights and measures," which had to bear the stamp of the Founders' Company.

In 1376 we have further proof of the Founders' Company being an important one, as two of their members were invited to be on the Common Council for that year, most of the other old City companies apparently also having two or more members on this Council.

Further mention of the Founders' Company is made in 1475, in the reign of Edward IV, when they were called upon to provide their share of an armed watch in the City on the occasion of the visit of the King to the City. Apparently each Company had certain portions of the route to watch and be responsible for.

On May 16th, 1587, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, "Yt is orderyd and decreyd that the Companye of the ffounders of thys Cyttye, shall sett and stampe upon every Brass Weyght that shal be hereafter assyzed, the Armes of theyre sayd Companye."

In 1613, in the reign of James I, it was again ordered "that the Master and Wardens of the Founders' Company may have the view of all brazen weights in the hands of the founders or makers thereof within the City of London, or three miles' compass thereof, and all brass weights of any kind made beyond the seas and brought from thence into this City or within three miles' compass thereof to be sold, and that such weights being found true and sufficient shall before they be sold or uttered be assized by the standard at Founders' Hall, and marked with their mark for that service."

In 1614 King James gave them another Charter and ordinance to look after the weights and measures.

In 1590 the Founders' Company bought two houses and a garden to build their Hall on, and this was supposed to be the garden or burial ground of the Monastery of St. Austin. In 1531 the Hall had apparently been built, and was used by the Founders for their Meetings. It was evidently destroyed by the Fire of London, so that on August 20, 1669, a subscription was opened towards the building of the Hall after the Great Fire.

After it was rebuilt the Hall was let for various purposes, and by consulting the records we find that the Hall was first let for a public place to preach in to the Nonconformists in 1672, the year of King

Charles' indulgence. The Hall being then newly built after the Great Fire of London, a fresh lease was granted during the time of King James' liberty in 1687. In the year 1699, a new lease for 41 years was granted to the congregation then being under the pastoral care of Mr. Fleming, who upon a call from the Scots' Church (which is believed to be the oldest church belonging to that nation in London <sup>1</sup>) had removed from Rotterdam to London; and at this place they continued until 1764, when in consequence of its being too small to accommodate the congregation, they erected a New Meeting House upon London Wall, at the corner of Coleman Street.<sup>2</sup>

Wilson, in his *Dissenting Churches*,<sup>3</sup> gives the following description of the Hall: "The Meeting House is situated at the top of Founders' Hall Court, and is accessible by means of a flight of stairs, the lower part being occupied by a Tavern. The building is of an oblong form, the size moderate, and the whole fitted up with great neatness. There are four galleries, one being raised a tier above the rest."

In 1700, I find an entry that a skylight be made and the Hall to be altered in various ways, and further "that the Parlour be lett to a Dancing Master for six months for six pounds, for the use of the Parlour three days a week."

After the expiry of the above lease of 41 years, Founders' Hall appears to have been let to various societies and various individuals until 1765, when the Hall was leased with Pews, Galleries, and other things therein to a certain Mr. Uffington and others for 31 years at a rental of £28 a year, they agreeing to lay out several hundred pounds in substantial repairs and improvements. I cannot find out exactly what sect this Mr. Uffington led, but the parent church used to meet at the Three Cranes, and their Pastor was a certain Mr. Barber, and

<sup>1</sup> In fact, in a printed memorial drawn up by Mr. Lawson, one of the former pastors, it is stated, "That the said congregation hath subsisted ever since there was a sufficient number of people from Scotland of the Presbyterian persuasion to form a public religious society, and [that] the Scots' Ambassadors attended Divine service [there]."

<sup>2</sup> Wilson's "Dissenting Churches," vol. II, p. 460. Cf. also Maitland's "London," vol. II, p. 893: "Founders' Hall is remarkable for having a Scotch Kirk Meeting in it, there being but one more of the kind in England."

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, II, p. 294.

apparently this Sect had seceded from a certain Mr. Pike, and the above Mr. Thomas Uffington appears to have been the leader in this secession, and to have written a pamphlet entitled "The Scripture Account of Justifying Faith."

On July 8, 1799, Founders' Hall was apparently leased to the Rev. Mr. Crole for 21 years. Anthony Crole was a native of Scotland, born in the year 1740. He was apprenticed to a Cabinet Maker, but with a view to the Ministry, relinquished his business, and in 1776 was ordained a Minister of Cumberland Street Chapel, from which place he removed to the Founders' Hall in 1797. Mr. Crole was succeeded by Mr. John Thomas, a student in the Academy at Hoxton, who was ordained to the pastoral office in Founders' Hall on March, 28th, 1804.<sup>1</sup>

In 1846 the Hall was apparently let to Messrs. Ricardo, the premises being required for the Electric Telegraph Company, and on June 20, 1853, there is a minute to the effect "That the offer of the Electric Telegraph Company to take a Lease at £400 per annum, be accepted"; and thus Founders' Hall, after being the first Meeting House of the Scotch Church in London, became the first, or practically the first, Telegraph Office in London.

In 1854 it was resolved that the Founders, for their own purposes, should purchase No. 13, St. Swithin's Lane.

In 1865 the Founders' Company celebrated their 500th anniversary by holding a banquet at the Crystal Palace. The City Press of the 5th August, 1865, gives a full account of this, and from the copy of their notice I find that 150 guests sat down to dinner, and that nearly, or quite, half the number were ladies. "No such formal inauguration of the pleasant custom of associating our better halves in the delights of the table had before occurred. Now, however, the spell is broken, and

"Citizens will deem it a pleasant thing to dine  
With fair ones gay in all the pride of silk and crinoline."

Apparently the dinner was a great success.

<sup>1</sup>See Wilson's Dissenting Churches, vol. II, pp. 294-301.

## II

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF THE EARLY PARTNERS

## I

## WILLIAM EZRA BOWEN

WILLIAM EZRA BOWEN, son of Ezra and Elizabeth Bowen, was born in Philadelphia, in Pine Street, near Third, on the 3d of June, 1797, and died on April 14, 1866. The brief account of his life which follows is taken, in substance, from an article which appeared in the *Commercial List and Price Current* of Philadelphia after his death.

Mr. Bowen first entered mercantile life when a boy, as an apprentice to Mr. John Dorsey, who was an auctioneer. In those days mercantile apprentices were numerous, and many of our old-school merchants held that relation in early life. After remaining with Mr. Dorsey until he was of age, Mr. Bowen engaged with the well-known auction firm of Montmollin & Moses and remained with them until they discontinued business. He then formed a connection with the firm of Taylor & Wagner, Mr. Taylor having been appointed auctioneer by the Governor. After Mr. Taylor's commission expired, the late William Milnor, formerly Mayor of Philadelphia, received the appointment of auctioneer, and the firm was continued as Milnor & Wagner. When, about the year 1821, Mr. Milnor's commission as auctioneer expired, the firm was changed to T. & S. Wagner, and Mr. Bowen remained with that house until the year 1828. When the Messrs. Wagner discontinued the auction business, a new firm was created consisting of William E. Bowen and G. W. Richards. The firm of Bowen & Richards was continued until 1831, when the

Messrs. Brown made very favorable offers to Mr. Bowen to take charge of the dry goods' department of their business in Manchester, England. Mr. Bowen left this country in March, 1831. He became a partner of Brown, Shipley & Co., of Liverpool, and Brown Brothers & Co., of New York, in 1837. He remained in Liverpool until 1838, when he came back to the city of his birth and became resident partner in Philadelphia in 1839. On the retirement of Mr. Brown the name of the house was changed from John A. Brown & Co. to Browns & Bowen, under which name it continued until Mr. Bowen retired on account of bad health, in December, 1859.

In early life Mr. Bowen took a great interest in public matters, especially those concerning commercial affairs. With Thomas P. Cope and a few other gentlemen he founded the Mercantile Library Company. He also took great interest in the fire department, and was one of those who originally organized the Fire Association. He was always active and willing to take his full share of labor in every department.

During his useful career Mr. Bowen was President of the Southwark Hose Company, Mercantile Library Company, Merchants' Exchange Company, and the Bank of Commerce. He was a Director in the Insurance Company of North America, the Western Savings Fund, and the Seaman's Friend Society, and was connected with many other useful associations.

Benevolence, generosity, and goodness of heart were characteristics of his daily life and character. He was an honorable, high-toned gentleman, and in his loss the community has cause to mourn the departure of one who was an ornament to humanity.

Mr. Bowen was twice married. His first wife was Mary Ridge Haylander, whom he married on July 3, 1821, at Philadelphia. She died on April 29, 1833, at Manchester, England. On May 31, 1834, he married at Bridele, Pembrokeshire, South Wales, Elizabeth Kirtley, daughter of George and Elizabeth Kirtley, of Manchester, England. Miss Kirtley was born on June 23, 1811, and died on January 8, 1875.

## II

## JOSEPH SHIPLEY, JR.

JOSEPH SHIPLEY was born on April 12, 1795, in the old Shipley house, which stands on the corner of Sixteenth and French Streets, in Wilmington, Delaware, and died at his home, "Rookwood," in the same city, on May 8, 1867. He was the youngest but one of a family of twelve children, two of whom died in infancy.

His father, also named Joseph,<sup>1</sup> was the son of Thomas<sup>2</sup> Shipley, who came to this country with his father, William Shipley, his mother and two sisters in 1725. The family were Quakers, and were doubtless attracted to this country by the settlement of William Penn in Philadelphia.

The ship in which they came over sailed from Bristol in the spring and arrived off Philadelphia after a passage of two months.<sup>3</sup> She carried eighty passengers, an uncomfortably large number for the limited accommodations. During the voyage small-pox broke out and several of the ship's company died. As a result of the fact, the inhabitants of Philadelphia were so alarmed that the passengers were not allowed to land. The vessel accordingly "dropped down the river and anchored off the old Swedes Church,<sup>4</sup> near which they landed." They were kindly received by a man named Barnes, who conducted them through a dense forest, in which they saw plenty of wild game, to a house called "Blue House Tavern." Here they remained until the sick had recovered.

Soon after his arrival, William Shipley purchased a tract of land in Ridley township, some ten or twelve miles southwest of Philadel-

<sup>1</sup> Born November 11, 1752; died in 1832.

<sup>2</sup> Born April 24, 1718; died November, 1789.

<sup>3</sup> The account which follows is taken in substance from "A History of the Original Settlements on the Delaware," by Benjamin Ferris, Wilmington, 1846.

<sup>4</sup> Now the site of Wilmington.



phia, and there settled with his family. In 1727, he lost his wife, who died after a short illness.

In 1729, he married Elizabeth Levis, daughter of Samuel Levis, of Springfield, in the county of Chester. "She was a distinguished minister of the Society of Friends and in many respects a very remarkable woman." It was to her influence, if tradition is to be trusted, that the removal of the family from Ridley to Wilmington was due.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> After her marriage she dreamed that she was traveling on horseback, in a southerly direction, accompanied by a person in the character of a guide. The country through which she passed, appeared to be generally in its wild, original state, with few roads, and no bridges across the principal streams of water. After traveling a considerable distance from her home, she dreamed they ascended a high hill, from the summit of which a landscape of surpassing beauty opened on the view. Sloping lawns, wide rich valleys, broad rivers, and winding streams lay stretched out before them, interspersed with tall forests, clumps of trees and here and there a settler's cabin. On the presentation of this delightful prospect, Elizabeth Shipley inquired of her guide, what country this was. He replied, "it is a new settlement, and from its natural advantages is likely to become very populous: and I am authorized to inform you, that it is the design of Divine Providence, that William Shipley and his family should remove from Ridley and settle here, to which, if you submit, you shall become instruments of great benefit to the place and people; and the blessing of Heaven shall descend upon you and your labors."

When Elizabeth awoke, this dream remained vividly and deeply impressed on her memory. In the morning she related it to her husband, with all its extraordinary particulars. He smiled at the brightness of her imagination, and, perhaps, also at the importance she seemed to attach to the visionary occurrences of the narrative, at the same time remarking that he did not think it probable they would ever become inhabitants of her fairyland.

After several years, Elizabeth Shipley believed it to be her duty to make a religious visit to the meetings of Friends residing in the peninsula between the Delaware and Chesapeake Bay. Quietly pursuing her journey and ascending the hill she arrived at a spot near which a Swedish settler had erected for himself a humble cabin. Here, suddenly raising her eyes, a widely extended tract opened on her view: it was the same bright and beautiful scene which had been so deeply impressed on her imagination in her dream.

After accomplishing the object of her journey she returned to her home in Ridley, and on a suitable occasion mentioned to her husband the singular coin-

On his father's death, which occurred in 1832, our Joseph Shipley bought out the other heirs, and so became full owner of the Shipley property, including valuable water rights on the Brandywine, which had been purchased by his grandfather, Thomas, in 1755. His interest in his native place continued throughout his life, and after his retirement from active business he returned from England to pass his remaining days in Wilmington, the home of his ancestors.

I have been unable to obtain any information about Mr. Shipley's early life, but it is evident from his subsequent career, and especially from his letters, that while he had to make his own way in the world, he must have received a fairly good education and an excellent busi-

vidence between the landscape of her dream and the real scene in the vicinity of the Christina.

It is said that, on quietly listening to his wife's narrative, he gently put it by, saying, "it may do to think about another time."

The full persuasion of Elizabeth Shipley that they were called to settle at Wilmington, and her firm confidence in the rectitude of her views in relation to the event, at length induced her husband to visit the new settlement. With great confidence in the judgment and prudence of his wife, he nevertheless wished to examine the subject for himself. On viewing the place, he found it situated between two rivers of very different character; the one on the north,<sup>1</sup> rocky and rough, having within four miles of the settlement a fall of one hundred and twenty feet; the one on the south<sup>2</sup> having a deep channel with a tide that rose and fell about seven feet. The sagacious mind of William Shipley soon perceived that nature had designed to favour this spot in no ordinary degree; that the river on the north was admirably adapted for mills and manufactories, while the other was as well suited to navigation and commerce.

He was now as well satisfied with the evidence of his senses as his wife had been from the internal evidence which had produced conviction on her own understanding. Before he returned, he purchased a lot at the easterly corner of Market and Second streets, and before the close of the year he bought more than twelve acres of land lying between Second and Fifth streets, extending from Market street westwardly nearly to West street.

Thus began the connection of the Shipley family with Wilmington—a connection which has continued ever since. Although Joseph Shipley, the subject of the present sketch, was not a descendant of William Shipley by his second wife, it is quite certain that Elizabeth Shipley's dream was a potent factor in shaping his life history.

<sup>1</sup>Brandywine Creek.

<sup>2</sup>The Christina.

ness training in Philadelphia. In the early days, Mr. S. Canby, Jr., seems to have been his business friend or employer, but the first definite information that I have of any specific business arrangement is in a little account book which mentions a trip to Washington, Alexandria, Fredericksburg, Richmond and Petersburg. In these cities he bought for Mr. John Welsh of Philadelphia, and some other clients, the notes of banks in North and South Carolina and Charleston at a discount of from five to fifteen per cent., paying for them in Virginia currency, or by drafts on Philadelphia, which were usually at a premium. It was while he was absent on this trip that Mr. Welsh first suggested his going abroad to represent him there—a proposition which Mr. Shipley gladly accepted. His departure seems to have taken place under somewhat depressing conditions, for we read in his diary, "In sickness and sorrow I left Philadelphia on the longest tour I had yet taken and for a foreign land, and on the 20th of October sailed from New York." On the 8th of October, the day before he left Philadelphia, he had received full power of attorney from Mr. Welsh to represent him in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland; as well as a letter from his old friend, Mr. Canby, enclosing a number of letters of introduction. The letter is so full of sound practical advice to a young man starting out for himself in a new country that I quote it below in full.

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 8, 1819.

DEAR JOSEPH:

I have procured a number of introductory letters which I hand you herewith. They are such as must be flattering to a young man about to leave his native land and I hand them with much pleasure, confident that your amiable and gentlemanly deportment while abroad will be as satisfactory to your friends as honourable to yourself. We have passed many years together and the sincere and brotherly interest which I have in your prosperity and welfare will not diminish with separation. I trust your assurance of my regard for you will excuse, as it has heretofore done, the freedom with which

I address you. You are about entering into new scenes and to mix with people whose habits and manners are new to you. Let it always be your endeavour to retain your native modesty, while at the same time you maintain an entire confidence in and possession of yourself. This confidence is necessary to guard you against being surprised or hastily led into measures and conduct which reflection and judgment would not sanction. You will associate with persons experienced in the commerce of the world, and though I would not recommend your being suspicious, be cautious and wary. But this self-possession or confidence will not alone avail you. Habituate yourself to reflection on the various subjects which will claim your attention, and you will, with the good counsel and advice your letters give you access to, be enabled to form correct conclusions and opinions; and when they are made, act on them with firmness and perseverance. Temper that firmness with suavity of manner and you will acquit yourself on all occasions in such a way as to gain, not lose, friends. You will be introduced to the best society in the countries you visit, and I strongly recommend your mixing with it in all the intervals of leisure from your business. Acquaint yourself with the mercantile customs of the cities and towns you visit, and with the habits and prejudices of the people in their mercantile and social relations. I cannot too strongly urge your taking notes of your observations on almost all occasions, for which purpose you can always command an hour either before you retire or early in the morning. Half of those who travel do so to no purpose from want of attention to this particular. The information they acquire is jumbled together without order or arrangement and is soon lost. You are going into a quarter of the world where many excellent lessons in economy may be learned, and by a man who has his way to work through the world the study is a most important one. Too many of our young men who go abroad launch into the extravagances and follies of the cities which they visit, return as fops and as fools, disgrace themselves and injure their friends. I am pleased in feeling entire confidence that your friends have nothing to apprehend on that account. I have mentioned the great importance which a knowledge of the French language will prove to you on the Continent and I flatter myself the application you can give to it on

your passage out and while in Liverpool will be of great service to you. Wherever you may be, endeavour to get into the best society and I pray you avoid the demoralising, the debasing dissipation which too many of our countrymen fall into when from under the influence and restraint of their families and friends. The tour you are about making is full of importance to you, for on your attention in all respects . . . depends your future success and respectability. Wherever you may be I shall feel anxious to hear of your movements and welfare and I beg you will embrace frequent occasions for writing me.

With my best wishes for a pleasant voyage, I am, most sincerely,  
Your friend, S. C., JUN.

In Liverpool Mr. Shipley looked after Mr. John Welsh's vessels and cargoes consigned to that port, and attended to the loading of the ships on their return voyages. On the 6th of November, Mr. Welsh writes requesting him to go at once to Havre and take charge of the ship *Dido*, laden with cotton for that port. He gives specific instructions not only as to his journey there, but also about the disposition of the cargo. He is to sell the cotton on arrival without storing, and remit the funds to London at the lowest rate of exchange. He is then to advertise the ship for Madeira, Charleston, and Savannah, and to secure a full cargo of brandy, wine, potatoes, provisions, etc. He states: "All sorts of eatables are wanted there,"<sup>1</sup> and adds, "If the prices are low, put some in on my own account." He also informs him that he has drawn some bills of exchange on him which will not appear until he returns to Liverpool, and that while in Liverpool he is to use the name of Joseph Shipley, Jr. & Company, Mr. Welsh adding, "myself being the 'company.'" Mr. Shipley continued to transact business under this name until January, 1822, when the firm name appears to have been changed to Shipley, Welsh & Company. As an indication of the care with which he looked after Mr. Welsh's interests, he writes on the 27th of October, 1821: "We generally receive letters free of postage by all vessels consigned to certain

<sup>1</sup> Whether in Madeira or Savannah is not clear from the letter.

firms, names specified, and these letters are frequently delivered several hours earlier than through the Post-Office.”<sup>1</sup> It is evident, therefore, that before Mr. Shipley became a partner of William & James Brown & Company he had established a reputation for himself as a merchant in Liverpool. It is probable that in this way he had attracted the notice of Mr. William Brown, and this fact, added to the knowledge that Mr. John A. Brown of Philadelphia had of him before he left that city, was the reason for his selection as a partner in the Liverpool house.

On Mr. Shipley's entering the firm, the business of Shipley, Welsh & Company was transferred to them for a year at least, for on the 2d of February, 1826, we find Mr. Shipley writing to Mr. John A. Brown in Philadelphia: “On concluding the arrangement by which I became a partner in the concern of W. & J. Brown & Company, I was authorized to offer Mr. John Welsh one half the net commission on any business he might send or procure for the House for one year, that the business of Shipley, Welsh & Company might be immediately transferred. At the expiration of the year Mr. Welsh's business would, of course, be continued on the same terms as that of other correspondents.”

In the later years of his business life in Liverpool, Mr. Shipley was a great sufferer from gout. Indeed the climate of Liverpool aggravated this difficulty to such an extent that he was obliged to give up active business and to return to Wilmington, much to the regret of his partners on both sides of the Atlantic, with whom, however, he kept up the closest friendship, maintaining with them a friendly correspondence to the end of his life. This correspondence was especially active in the year 1857, when many letters full of sympathy and wise counsel were received from him as the result of his experience in 1837. His letters during the Civil War to his late partners both in New York

<sup>1</sup> In those days vessels were allowed to carry a ship's mail made up at the last moment in the office of the shipper, and delivered at once to the consignee on the arrival of the vessel.

and in England, are especially interesting. They were models of wisdom and good temper and show an accurate knowledge of the early history of the United States quite unusual in a man whose life had been devoted mainly to business.<sup>1</sup>

In 1860, after hearing of William Brown's gift of a public library building to the town of Liverpool, Mr. Shipley sent through Mr. Hamilton a donation of a thousand pounds as an expression of his interest in the welfare of the city where he had spent so many years. At Mr. Brown's suggestion, the money was appropriated for the purchase of rare books, mainly relating to the country of his birth, such as Catlin's *Original Drawings of the American Indians*, Audubon's *Birds*, etc.

Mr. Shipley was a man of simple habits, of marked business ability and of great force of character. His early account books, kept while representing Mr. Welsh in Liverpool, are models of neatness and accuracy. He never married, but lived with two maiden sisters at his home in Rookwood, Wilmington, until he died. His great-nephew, Mr. E. Bringhurst, Jr., who now occupies the Rookwood home, thus describes the manner in which Mr. Shipley became its possessor: During a visit to the United States in 1847 he was in the habit of joining Mr. Bringhurst's family on their walks, an exercise of which they were all very fond. On one of these walks they passed over the very spot where the residence of Rookwood now stands, whereupon Mr. Shipley said to Mr. Bringhurst, Sr., "Edward, this is my idea of a situation for a country place. If thee can arrange to buy it I would come here to live." After his return to England, in 1850, the property was bought, the place surveyed, and a rough sketch sent to him, from which plans for residence, buildings, etc., were made by an English architect.

<sup>1</sup> An extract from one of these letters is given on pp. 120 sq.

## III

## STEWART BROWN AND STEWART HENRY BROWN

STEWART BROWN, the son of Stewart and of Sarah Brown, was born on January 4, 1802, in Baltimore, Maryland, and died in New York on May 30, 1880. He began his business career as a lad in the office of his uncle's firm, Alexander Brown & Sons, in Baltimore, in 1815. In 1827, he joined his cousin, James Brown, in New York, and spent the rest of his life there as a partner of Brown Brothers & Company. When from advancing years James Brown relinquished the active management of the business, it passed naturally into the hands of Stewart Brown. He was a director of many financial institutions of the city, in the management of which he took an active part, and in times of financial trouble his sound judgment and wise counsel were eagerly sought after.

One who knew Mr. Brown intimately thus describes him:

Stewart Brown in his prime, as we knew him forty years ago and onward, was probably one of the ablest and most remarkable business men in New York. As a banker, having intimate business relations with all the principal cities of the world, he was known as one whose integrity was always rated at the maximum figure; whose ability and sound judgment always placed him at the head among those engaged in his special line of business; whose influence was always conservative, even to the very extreme point of safety; whose quick and wise perception of what was safe and best to do in every emergency seemed almost an inspiration; whose courage in his unvarying course of vigilant watchfulness made him a most valuable counselor and friend; whose success in the management of his business—without any attempt at show, or special anxiety, or extraordinary effort—was apparent to all who came into his stately presence; whose exemplary liberality as a citizen and as a Christian gentleman was worthy of all praise and admiration; and whose charming social qualities made him the idol of a wide circle of intimate friends.



Mr. Brown held many positions of public influence. On December 2, 1834, he was elected a member of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, and continued a member until his death. He was a director of the Bank of America from 1846 to 1854. He was one of the managers of the New York Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor, being elected to that office at the time of the organization of the Society in 1845. He was a life member of the American Bible Society and also a life member of the New York Historical Society, and through his efforts the Society secured its valuable collection of Egyptian antiquities. He was one of the incorporators of the New York Society for the Relief of the Ruptured and Crippled, and its president from 1875 to 1879. He was one of the trustees named in the act of incorporation of the Young Men's Christian Association of the City of New York and the first chairman of its Board of Trustees, holding that office until his death.

He was also a prominent member of many religious and philanthropic institutions in the city, and especially those connected with his own branch of the Christian Church. He was a member of the Board of Managers of the Foreign and Domestic Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church from 1850 until the time of his death. He devoted much time and effort to the discharge of his duties as a member of the Foreign Committee, and was a liberal contributor to the funds of the Society. He was a manager of the Evangelical Knowledge Society, and a member of its Executive Committee.

Mr. Brown was a man of deeply religious nature and of catholic spirit. His sympathy with the work of the Christian Church extended far beyond the limits of his own denomination. Simple in his habits and tastes, punctual in the discharge of all duties assumed by him, he was a man of great social charm, and his home was a centre of gracious hospitality.

His funeral took place on the morning of February 2, 1880, at the Church of the Ascension, corner of Fifth Avenue and Tenth Street.

Mr. Brown had been a member of this church for forty years, and at the time of his death was senior warden. The services were conducted by Bishop Potter, assisted by Dr. John Cotton Smith, the Rev. John F. Steen, and the Rev. J. A. Aspinwall.

Mr. Brown's lifelong friend, the Rev. Dr. Dyer, speaks of him in these words:

We have known him long and well. For more than a quarter of a century we have been closely associated with him in benevolent and Christian work, and have ever found him one of the truest and best of men. No differences of opinion have ever disturbed our relations. On the contrary, when they have occurred, they have only served to bring into clearer light the sterling excellences of his character. For these many, many years we have walked together in the heavenly way, and labored to do our Master's work. We bless God for the privilege of such companionship, the memory of which will ever be cherished as a sacred treasure. He has gone home. We a little longer wait.

At a meeting of the Evangelical Knowledge Society, held on Monday, February 9, 1880, the following tribute to his memory was read:

Mr. Brown was one of the originators of this society, and for more than a quarter of a century has been an active and influential member of the Executive Committee. A sincere and intelligent attachment to our Church and a profound reverence for the truth prompted him to enter upon this service. He felt that both the Church and the Truth of God were imperilled by the errors which were prevailing within our communion, and he was ready to use all the influence which God had given him to withstand and drive away these errors. His associates in the Society, and especially in this Committee, know with what energy, promptness, and liberality he has co-operated in carrying into effect the various plans and measures of usefulness which have from time to time been adopted. While he was valiant for what he believed to be the truth and resolute and uncompromising in opposing any and everything in doctrine or practice which threatened that truth, he was at the same time a man of an exceptionally

lovely Christian spirit and exceedingly tender in his feelings towards his fellow men. It was a rule of his life to do good to all as he had the ability and opportunity. A close and careful reader of the Bible and a humble follower of his Lord, his life and character were a beautiful illustration of the spirit and power of the Gospel of Christ which he so dearly loved. His high social position and his large wealth were consecrated to the service of God. He felt that these and all else he possessed were but so many talents committed to him, to be used for his Master's honor and glory. There was an unaffected humility in his bearing and conduct which inspired the highest respect and commanded the entire confidence of all who knew him. All that he said and did was characterized by that unstudied simplicity which lends such a charm to human life. In a word he was a man of God, and walked and lived in daily communion with Him.

On May 6, 1830, Mr. Brown married, in New York, Mary Ann Abbott, daughter of Henry R. and Mary Ann Abbott. She was born at Muswell Hill, near London, England, March 11, 1812, and died November 28, 1874.

Mr. Brown's eldest son, Stewart Henry Brown, followed him in the business. He was born in New York in 1831. He graduated from Columbia College in 1851 with the degree of A.B., and after graduation entered the office of Brown Brothers & Company in New York, where he remained until 1856, when he went to Liverpool to become a partner of Brown, Shipley & Company. In addition to his duties as an active member of the firm, of which he was the only resident partner from 1864 until 1889—when the Liverpool house was closed—he was a director of the Royal Insurance Company, and of the Union Bank of Liverpool until it was amalgamated with Lloyd's Bank. He was also Justice of the Peace for the County of Lancashire, a trustee of the Bluecoat School, and a member of the Committee of the Liverpool Southern Hospital. On December 27, 1860, he married Emily Frances Sarah Birkett, daughter of James and Sarah Birkett of Liverpool. He died at his home at Quarrybank, Allerton, Liverpool, March 17, 1905.

## IV

## GEORGE STEWART BROWN

GEORGE STEWART BROWN was born in Baltimore, on May 7, 1834, in a house occupying the site on which the City Hall stood until 1890. He received his education at the McNally Institute in Baltimore. At the age of sixteen he entered his father's office, and at twenty he was admitted as a member of the firm of Alexander Brown & Sons. After his father's death, in 1859, the responsibility of the business of the firm fell largely upon his shoulders. He inherited the business acumen of his father and grandfather and ably sustained the reputation of the firm which they established. In addition to the care and management of his own business, he held many positions of trust and honor in commercial, benevolent and religious enterprises. He was President of the Baltimore & Havana Steamship Company; Director of the National Mechanics Bank, and for a short time its President; Director of the Calvert Sugar Refinery; Director of the Union Railroad Company. He was connected with the Canton Company for thirty years as President or Director, and also Director of the Savings Bank of Baltimore.

Mr. Brown was a prominent factor in the charitable and philanthropic life of Baltimore. From 1859 until his death he was one of the Managers of the House of Refuge—an institution in which his father had been greatly interested. He was also for several years one of the Managers of the Asylum for the Blind, and the Maryland Bible Society. He was one of the Trustees of the Peabody Institute, and for his lifetime identified with the Young Men's Christian Association and one of its most liberal supporters. He was also one of the founders of the Free Summer Excursions for the Poor.

On April 17, 1867, he was appointed Paymaster-General of the State with the rank of Brigadier-General on the Staff of Governor Thomas Swann. He was recommissioned on the Staff of Governor

Oden Bowie, April 15, 1869, and was again recommissioned with the same rank on February 5, 1872, on the Staff of Governor William Pinkney Whyte. He was recommissioned with the same rank on the Staff of Governor James Black Groome, on April 6, 1874; was recommissioned with the same rank on the staff of Governor John Lee Carroll. He was again recommissioned, on April 8, 1884, with the same rank on the Staff of Governor Robert M. McLane, and resigned on February 8, 1886, during the administration of Governor Lloyd.

Mr. Brown was elected Park Commissioner of Druid Hill Park in 1881, and twice served the city as a member of the Board of Harbor Commissioners and the Commission on Manufactures.

He took an active interest in politics in his early years and was always a staunch Democrat of the Jeffersonian type. In later years he did not affiliate with the managers of the party. He was one of the leaders of the Reform Movement in 1859, and also took a leading part in the Reform Movement of 1875, and for two years thereafter was President of the Democratic City Convention. He was prominent in the campaign of 1887 when Chief Judge George William Brown was the Independent candidate for Mayor against Mr. James Hodges, and in 1889 became prominently identified with the Independent movement which resulted in the Fusion ticket. He was Chairman of the Nominating Committee of One Hundred which conducted the initial movements on behalf of the Independent Democrats.

At a meeting of the Reform League, held on May 21, 1890, the following minute was passed, which I insert in full, as it gives what I believe to be a true picture of the man, who loved his native city Baltimore, and was ever ready to join any project that would contribute to her advancement:

The Executive Committee of the Baltimore Reform League, speaking for the League as well as for themselves, desire to record their sense of the loss which has been sustained by this community and by the cause of good citizenship throughout the State, in the death of their late fellow-member and friend, GENERAL GEORGE S. BROWN.

Associated closely since the organization of the League in the discharge of the duties which its membership imposes, they have never ceased to feel the value of his earnest and steadfast co-operation, in every way in which sincerity, integrity and manhood could give it efficiency and force. Under every discouragement and through all evil report, they have found him unshaken always in his sense of right and duty, and firm and fearless in resolution to obey it. The League is, therefore, proud to unite its tribute to his civic virtues, with the testimony which all his fellow-citizens will bear to his great personal and social usefulness and worth, and the modest ability of his character. By order,

CHARLES J. BONAPARTE, *Chairman.*

THOMAS S. BAER, *Secretary.*

At the time of his death, one of the leading papers of Baltimore spoke of him in the following words:

It is a common phrase, which often means nothing, that in the death of such and such a man the community has suffered a loss; but in the case of General Brown, it has the force of an actual truth. He was precisely that type of man who is missed when he passes away because he has done something in the world that needed doing, and has done it well. While a thorough business man and connected with the great financial transactions in which his firm was engaged, he was never so absorbed in his personal interests as to forget the patriotic claims of unselfish citizenship, and gave his time and attention as cheerfully to public as to private duty. He was, in fact, essentially a good citizen, conscientious, brave, modest and earnest, and the community has good reason to regret him.

Mr. Brown was never a robust man, his health having been impaired by a severe illness from which he suffered in early life. Great care, however, in the matter of diet and exercise in the open air enabled him to do his full share of a man's work. He was an excellent horseman, fond of hunting, a sport which he practised during his frequent visits to England, and also at his home near Baltimore. In

later years, when his health began to fail, he spent much time in summer on his yacht, which he had named *The Ballymena*, after the old village home of his grandfather. He was his own navigator, and held a Pilot's and a Master's certificate.

Mr. Brown died on May 19, 1890, and the funeral was held at his own house. It was conducted by the Rev. Dr. James Leftwich, the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, of which Mr. Brown was a member and a liberal supporter, and was attended by the leading citizens of Baltimore.

In 1857, Mr. Brown married Miss Harriet Eaton. They had one son, Alexander, named after his great-grandfather. He was born October 25, 1858, and is now the senior member of Alexander Brown & Sons.

## V

## JAMES MUNCASTER BROWN

JAMES MUNCASTER BROWN was born on December 8, 1820. As was the case with his half-brother Stewart, he was brought up in the Baltimore office of Alexander Brown & Sons. After serving his time there he became a partner in a firm in Baltimore.<sup>1</sup> In 1847, at James Brown's invitation, he came to New York to enter the firm of Brown Brothers & Company, with which he continued until his death in 1890.

Mr. Brown was a man of very regular habits, always appearing at the office at the same hour, almost at the same minute each day, leaving both for his lunch and for his home after the business of the day was over with equal punctuality. His judgment in business matters was sound and almost intuitive. He reached his decisions promptly, accepting or declining a piece of business almost on the instant and without, apparently, sufficient consideration, but rarely making a mistake. He was one of those men of whom it has been said that it is

<sup>1</sup> Seaver and Dunbar.

pleasanter to have a refusal from them than an acceptance from a less gracious person. This quality of prompt decision was of special value to the firm in the days of the Civil War, when the premium on gold was exposed to sudden fluctuations. At that time he had special oversight of the purchase and sale of sterling exchange, and he seldom left the office with an uncovered balance overnight. I remember an earnest discussion between himself and Stewart Brown, in which the latter criticised him because he had failed to take advantage of what seemed to Stewart the certainty of a change in the market. Finally an appeal was taken to James Brown. Stewart presented the case in a faultless and apparently convincing manner, whereupon Mr. Brown, Sr., asked James what he had to say in reply to Stewart's arguments. After hesitating a moment he replied, "Well, I do not know, Stewart may be right, but it seems to me safer to cover each transaction as it occurs." After a moment's reflection, James Brown turned to Stewart and said, "Your reasoning seems to be faultless, but my long experience in the management of the exchange business has taught me that the unexpected almost always happens. I think James is right, and you had better let him have his way." The sequel proved that James's intuition was right, and that, had he followed Stewart's advice, a serious loss would have occurred.

James M. Brown was a member of the Chamber of Commerce from 1860 until the time of his death. He was elected Vice-President in 1882, and served two terms as President from 1884 to 1887. He was a Trustee of the New York Life and Trust Company, and a Director of the Bank of America. He was one of the Board of Governors of the New York Hospital from 1861, serving as its Vice-President in 1882 and its President in 1887. He was a Manager of the American Bible Society from 1867, and from 1882 one of its Vice-Presidents, a Trustee of St. Luke's Hospital, a member of the Board of Directors of the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and of the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. He was one of the Trustees of Greenwood Cemetery, a Direc-



tor of Bloomingdale Asylum, and one of the Board of Managers of the Sailors' Snug Harbor. He was also one of the vestrymen of the Church of the Ascension, and identified with that Church for half a century. He was an active member of the Seamen's Mission, and one of the Managers of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church for twenty-six years, holding during nearly all that time the office of Treasurer. He was also a member of the Committee of the Evangelical Knowledge Society, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Young Men's Christian Association in New York, and its Treasurer, a member of the Board of Managers of the Evangelical Education Society, and a Trustee of Webb's Academy and Home for Shipbuilders.

In reading over the list of the various official positions which he held, and the duties of which he discharged most faithfully, one can readily see that his habit of punctuality and promptness formed in early life alone enabled him to discharge these various duties.

Mr. Brown died at Manchester, Vermont, on July 19, 1890. At a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, October 2, 1890, the first meeting of that body after the announcement of his death, the following tributes were paid to his memory by Mr. Samuel D. Babcock and Mr. Wm. E. Dodge:

"It was my privilege," said Mr. Babcock, "to be an official with him in this body [the Chamber of Commerce] for many years, as well as to be associated with him in several other organizations. Reviewing our experience in these relations, and our acquaintance which commenced nearly half a century ago, I can say without exaggeration that he lived on a plane above the large majority of men whom I have met, either in business or social circles. No questionable transaction found a place in his long and useful career among us.

"Though somewhat reserved in manner, he was thoroughly sincere, and promptitude, earnestness and conscientiousness were among his prominent characteristics.

"Unlike many occupying a conspicuous position, he was alive to

the claims which the community had upon him, and he gave liberally of his time and means to good works. The records of churches, hospitals, charitable institutions, and of numerous secular corporations, bear testimony to his valuable and disinterested services."

Mr. William E. Dodge thus characterized Mr. Brown:

"Thank God, we have in this city many scores of men who love the right and cannot be tempted to evil. They are staunch, faithful, cool-headed and able. Their quiet, unseen influence is always felt and feared. They form a regulating and controlling power hard to estimate. As a leader among these men, Mr. James M. Brown had a large place. He was singularly modest and unobtrusive. His name and deeds were never heralded in the press; but he never flinched from any duty, and his judgment was so true, and his steadiness in service so marked, that he grew quietly to be a man of great influence and of real power in the community.

"As an American, he had the virtues of the olden time—always putting love of country above loyalty to party. As a citizen, he was energetic, untiring and faithful.

"As a banker, a model of reliability, strong good sense, true judgment and steadiness of purpose.

"As a Christian gentleman, his time, his influence and his money were always open to every worthy call for help or sympathy.

"Strongly attached to his own special Church, he was still in hearty accord with good men of whatever name, and ready to coöperate in a practical way with every object he believed would help men who suffered or were in need, in any part of the world.

"His sympathies were broad, catholic and far-reaching, and the absence of his wise counsel will be sorely felt in many Boards of Christian and philanthropic work."

Of his services to the Church of the Ascension, Col. Frederick A. Conkling spoke as follows:

"Since he succeeded his brother, the late lamented Mr. Stewart Brown, as Vestryman of the Parish, and subsequently as a Church-

warden, his devotion to the services of the Church has been as uniform and regular as that of the Rector himself. . . .

"In a note which I have received from the Rev. Dr. Donald, the Rector of Ascension Parish, that gentleman says:

"His loss to my Parish all the world may know. His loss to me, whom he upheld and encouraged in the first dark days of my rectorship, and afterward in the undertakings of a renewed prosperity, none can know."

On October 16, 1845, Mr. Brown married Julia Elizabeth Post. His eldest son, Waldron Post Brown, is now a member of the firm.

## VI

### HOWARD POTTER

For the facts contained in the following brief sketch of Mr. Howard Potter, I am mainly indebted to his son, Mr. James Brown Potter, and to his daughter, Miss Grace Howard Potter.

Of Mr. Potter's ancestry and early life, Mr. James Brown Potter writes as follows:

My father was born in North College, Union College, Schenectady, on July 8, 1826. He was the second son of Alonzo Potter and Maria Nott,—the former, Professor and later Vice President of Union College and subsequently Episcopal Bishop of Pennsylvania, and the latter, daughter of Dr. Eliphalet Nott, President for more than sixty years of Union College, whose notable public address and sermon, delivered in Albany in 1804 on the deplorable death of Alexander Hamilton, rendered him famous throughout the length and breadth of the land.

On both the paternal and maternal sides my father was of New England Puritan stock of English descent, and counted among his distinguished relatives Nathan Hale, the patriot schoolmaster, and other noted New Englanders, the Rev. Joel Benedict of Connecticut, his maternal great grandfather, and the brother-in-law of Mr. James Brown; Rt. Rev. Horatio Potter, Bishop of New York, his uncle;

Clarkson N. Potter, a noted lawyer and Congressman; Gen. Robert B. Potter of the 9th Army Corps, the first man to cross the bridge at Antietam, gaining that day for the Union cause; Rt. Rev. Henry C. Potter, a distinguished bishop of New York; Dr. Eliphalet N. Potter, President of Union and later of Hobart College, and other brothers distinguished in architecture and other walks in life.

Mr. Potter entered Union College in 1842 and graduated in 1846. After his graduation he remained for a year as tutor in Latin and Greek. Later he studied law and was admitted to the New York Bar, but soon relinquished the practice of law<sup>1</sup> to become Secretary and Treasurer of the Novelty Iron Works, then the most notable machine shop in this country. In 1859, at the invitation of Mr. James Brown, he entered the firm of Brown Brothers & Company, with power of attorney, becoming a partner in 1861.

In 1849 he married Mary Louisa Brown, the daughter of Mr. James Brown, and after his marriage spent six months or more as attaché at the Court of Berlin.

Mr. James Brown Potter states that his father "derived his name Howard from John Howard, the British prison philanthropist, for whom his father had a particular veneration." The name could not have been more appropriately chosen. Among the positions of public trust held by Mr. Potter were the following: He was Trustee of the Children's Aid Society from 1857 to 1897; President of the Orthopedic Dispensary from 1878 to 1891;<sup>2</sup> President of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor from 1878 to 1884; President of the Niagara Park Association; Treasurer of the

<sup>1</sup> Of Mr. Potter's law practice his daughter, Miss Grace Howard Potter, writes me as follows: "My father's first and only case was between a Mr. and Mrs. ———, who wished for a divorce, but upon Mrs. ———'s asking, just before the papers were signed, if she might take her husband to board and do his washing, Mr. Potter decided that the case had better not go on."

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Potter was a Trustee from the organization of the hospital in April, 1866, to 1891; its Secretary from April, 1866, to 1878; and an Honorary Member of the Board from 1891 to 1897.

United States Sanitary Commission during the War; one of the Managers of St. Luke's Hospital from 1869 to 1886; Treasurer of St. Johnland from 1871 to 1883; First Vice-President of the State Charities Aid from 1874 to 1880; Trustee of Union College, as well as of other charitable and educational institutions.

The public estimation in which he was held may, in a faint measure, be gathered from the following expressions from the press:

His kind manners and gentleness of heart endeared him to everyone, while those who knew him intimately best knew the firmness of his character and the uprightness which underlay it.

In London he was one of the few Americans to whom English men of business could go for accurate information and sound views as to the strange financial theories fermented in his own country by agitators, pseudo-economists and demagogues.

The New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor made the following record on its minutes, April 12, 1897:

We sorrow at the loss of a wise counselor and wise friend, respected for his integrity and wisdom and loved because of the blamelessness of his life. We express our appreciation of the loss that has befallen the City of New York in the death of a citizen to whom no cry of distress ever came unheeded and whose life was one long effort on behalf of the cause of humanity.

The Children's Aid Society paid the following tribute:

He became a Trustee thirty-nine years ago. Commanding in presence, gentle in voice, wise in counsel, and most persuasive in address, he always stood before us as the model of a Christian gentleman. We place on record this expression of our affection and gratitude.

As illustrating Mr. Potter's devotion to the service of these friendless boys, the following quotation may be interesting:

Some years ago a vestryman at the conclusion of Sunday morning service said to a brother vestryman across the aisle, "Come with me

this evening and see my boys." "Your boys? what do you mean?" The other replied: "Come and see." After some persuasion his friend went with him and found himself on a wintry, icy night at the Children's Aid Society rooms. There the vestryman took the desk as leader, read the Scriptures, offered prayer, made a short appropriate address, and then called upon his friend to speak.

At the close of the service his friend asked, "How long have you been doing this without my ever having suspected it?" "Sixteen years," was the reply.

Of Mr. Potter's personal characteristics, his son speaks as follows:

My father was a singularly handsome man of great culture, information and refinement, of peculiar charm of manner, and devoted to books and art. He possessed a beautiful voice which he used admirably, was fond of his fellow men, and given to hospitality. One of his friends, now dead, once said to me about him—"I never hear of him without affection, I never see him without pleasure, I never part from him without regret. He was the handsomest young man I ever saw."

He wrote always with a quill—a beautifully neat, clear, characteristic, upright hand—was devoted to nature and travel, and an enthusiastic horseman.

His daughter, Miss Grace Howard Potter, adds this touching incident: "In talking with an old servant the other day about my father, she told me about a gentleman who came to our old 37th Street house one day about six months after my father's death, asking to see him. When told that he was no longer living, his eyes filled with tears, and he said: 'Oh, I did so want to see Mr. Potter, to have him see what I am and to thank him for what he did for me.' Then he told the maid that he had been a poor little bootblack, who had been sent to the West by Mr. Potter, and that he was now a rich man and Governor of one of the States."

My own relations to Mr. Potter were of peculiar intimacy. To my father, after the death of his older sons, he was more a son than

a son-in-law. During the long years of our association as partners, he was like an elder brother to me; and to his wise and tactful efforts, more than to those of any other member of the firm, is due the gradual and successful change from the older to the newer methods of modern business. His wide acquaintance with the best class of Americans and his knowledge of American methods of business were of inestimable advantage to the London house, and his death there, on March 24, 1897, was a great loss not only to his many friends, but to our large clientèle of Americans passing through London year by year. A walk with him through the city and a visit to the old churches and other historic localities was an experience never to be forgotten. He was so well read in the best English literature that his mind was a treasure-house of interesting information from which he could draw at any moment for the benefit of his friends. He was a facile writer and his ordinary personal letters had a peculiar charm. I could give many specimens, but a birthday letter written to his friend and associate in the Children's Aid Society, Mr. Charles Loring Brace, will suffice:

*June 19, 1874.*

I thank you heartily for your birthday note, and wish you many happy returns of this day, which, I am sure, you will never have cause to regret, and which thousands may, and do, bless. You do well to be grateful that God has given it to you to live the life you have—in every aspect of it one for which the world also may be grateful. It is not given to many to be a pioneer in such a march as you are leading, and if now and then the way is rough and thorny and noisome, it is part of the honor of the position that it should be so. After all, too, it is only for a little while, and then will come—who can say what of rest and peace and high enjoyment? “It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared.” . . . You will never know, let me say in return, what a help you are spiritually to other men, with some of whom you never come in personal contact at all, or but very rarely. But—“to God only thanks.”

## VII

## CHARLES DENSTON DICKEY

Of Charles Denston Dickey, his son, Mr. Charles Denston Dickey, Jr., writes under date of January 4, 1908, as follows:

My father was born at No. 69 Greenwich Street, New York City, on October 9th, 1818. His father was Robert Dickey who came to this country from Ireland in 1798, and his mother was Anne Brown<sup>1</sup> of Baltimore. His early life was spent in and about New York. He attended school here, and when he was fifteen years of age entered the College of the City of New York where he spent two years, but, owing to the failure in business of his father, he was obliged to give up a college career, and, through the kindness of your father, he obtained a position in Brown Brothers & Company, and began work with them on the 1st of January, 1835.

From my recollection of the many talks I have had with him in regard to his early business life, [I gather that] he stayed with Brown Brothers & Company, New York, for six years, at which time he was acting as Cashier of the firm. Then, at Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Nicholson's urgent request, he went out with them to New Orleans in the capacity of General Manager of Mr. Nicholson's New Orleans office. I have often heard his account of the trip to New Orleans, which was made largely by stage-coach, and in which, owing to the upsetting of the coach, Mr. Nicholson's arm was broken.

If I am correct, he remained in New Orleans one or two years, and then was appointed Agent in Savannah. I think it was upon this occasion that your father called him into his private office, and, after wishing him "Good-bye" and "Good luck" made the remark to him—"Charles, you leave us with our entire confidence, but if you speculate you lose it." My recollection is that he went to Mobile and formed the firm of Dickey & Morrell in 1847. On the 10th of July, 1850, he married my mother, who was Mary Witherspoon, daughter

<sup>1</sup>Daughter of Dr. George Brown of Baltimore.



of Dr. John Witherspoon of Greensboro, Alabama. He remained in Mobile until the outbreak of the war, and owing to his being at that time the representative of Brown Brothers & Company (with presumably Northern sympathies) he was subjected to some very disagreeable experiences at the hands of the Southern mob. His house on Government Street was burned, and his office pretty well ransacked. Owing to the fact that my mother was a Southern woman and had many relatives in the Southern Army, he went to Liverpool with his family soon after coming North, and remained there during the early part of the war, after which he returned to New York, and made that his residence for the balance of his life.

He was admitted to partnership in Brown Brothers & Company in October, 1859, and continued a partner until his death at Islip, Long Island, on the 13th of August, 1897, his connection with the firm having lasted continuously as employee, agent and partner for sixty-two years.

He was peculiarly averse to accepting any Directorships or Trusteeships in outside companies, and, except in connection with some small family ones, I do not recall his ever having held such an office. He firmly believed that his duties in connection with Brown Brothers & Company required all the time he could possibly give to them, and he believed outside business connections would interfere with his work for the firm.

He was at one time Vestryman in the Church of the Holy Communion, New York, and in St. Peter's Church, Westchester, and was a Director in the Home for Incurables and the House of Rest for Consumptives, situated near his country home.

My own association with Mr. Dickey extended over so many years that I must add a few words of appreciation of the beauty and strength of his character. After my father's death, it was to him that I turned for counsel, not only in matters pertaining to our common business, but also in many others of a purely personal character. In the later years of my father's life he regarded him almost as a son. He was one of those rare men who, as he grew older, realized the importance of changes in business methods to meet modern conditions, and

while always exerting a conservative influence upon the younger men in the concern, appreciated the necessity for, and was not afraid of, entering upon new kinds of business adapted to the exigencies of modern times. He was a man of unusual business ability, a shrewd judge of men, and possessed in his prime an unerring instinct for the management of an exchange business. He was the most even-tempered man that I have ever known, with the quietest possible manner. In my long association with him as partner I do not recall an instance of his loss of self-control.

## VIII

FREDERICK WILLIAM MARSH CHALMERS <sup>1</sup>

FREDERICK W. M. CHALMERS was born at Bangalore, in Mysore, India, on December 17, 1836. His father, Frederick Skene Courtenay Chalmers, was then Military Resident for the Bangalore District of Mysore, India, which he left May, 1842. He ultimately became Rector of Beckenham, in Kent, near London, receiving the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Cambridge University.

Of the early life of Mr. Chalmers, Sr., his grandson writes as follows: "My grandfather was born in Nova Scotia on the 14th of June, 1804. His mother was then staying with her father, a Colonel Des Barres. This gentleman is said to have gone out to Canada on General Wolfe's staff, and as a result of his services received large land grants there after we had taken it from the French in 1759. He was afterward Governor of Prince Edward Island and was engaged in mapping the east coast of North America, so presumably he was an engineer. It is said that he was many times shipwrecked, but this does not seem to have hurt him, as he lived to be one hundred and two."

<sup>1</sup> During his business career, Mr. Chalmers never used his full name, but signed always, and was known as, Frederick Chalmers simply.

Mr. Chalmers, Sr., was himself not without experience of the dangers of the sea. His grandson continues: "My grandfather was nearly wrecked on his voyage as a baby back to England, the ship he was on just managing to struggle into Scilly. His father, who had some post in India obtained for him through Colonel Des Barres, died while my grandfather—then a young man—was on his way out to join him. However he, the latter, got a commission in the 22d Regiment of Madras and was eventually made Military Resident in Bangalore."

Young Mr. Chalmers, the subject of this sketch, was at the University of Cambridge when the Crimean War broke out. He was preparing to enter the Church, but, like many other young men at that time, he felt bound to abandon his chosen profession and enter the army, which he did with his father's full approval. Hart's "Army List" gives the following record of his military service:

Lieut. F. Chalmers entered the service October, 22, 1855, as an Ensign in the Rifle Brigade, 3rd Bat. He served in the Indian Mutiny Campaign of 1857 and 1858, including the capture of Cawnpore, the siege and capture of Lucknow, also the affairs of Koorsee and Nawabgunge under Sir Hope Grant, and latterly on the personal staff of that General. (Medal and clasp.) He became a lieutenant September, 7, 1858.

His son writes me that his father's Indian service was with Sir Colin Campbell's army, and not that of Sir James Outram. Sir Colin, who afterward became Lord Clyde, was the real captor of Lucknow, Sir James Outram having only relieved the garrison and withdrawn the besieged residents. "The first part of Lieutenant Chalmers's service under Lord Clyde was with his regiment," but "about half way through the campaign he was appointed to the staff of Sir Hope Grant, who was a cavalry officer, and was employed in the pursuit and suppression of the rebel army and the pacification of the country."

Lieutenant Chalmers left India in 1859 and rejoined his regiment,

the 3d Battalion of the Rifle Brigade, at the Depot at Winchester. Here he remained till 1861, serving during the latter part of the time as aide-de-camp on the personal staff of Major-General Sir Arthur J. Lawrence, K.C.B., who was in command of a brigade at the South Camp, Aldershot, Surrey. He retired from the army with the rank of captain on December 3, 1861.

Mrs. Chalmers writes of her husband's retirement: "When he left the army he had quite made up his mind to enter the Church, but this had to be given up, as the doctors all agreed that with the state his throat was in, it would have caused a breakdown in a very few months."

Mr. Chalmers's first business relations were with his wife's brother, Mr. Edlmann, with whom he continued for a year or two, after which he entered Brown, Shipley & Company.

He became a Director of the National Discount Company, Ltd., on February 15, 1888, and on April 2, 1895, he joined the board of the Standard Bank of South Africa, Ltd. He was also a Trustee for the English policy-holders of the New York Life Insurance Company.

Mr. Chalmers was of a retiring nature, fond of his books, finding his chief pleasure within the circle of his own home and friends, and the autumns he was able to spend at his shooting lodge in the Highlands of Scotland. He died very suddenly on December 28, 1898, of angina pectoris, after a brief illness, sincerely mourned by all who knew him. Mrs. Chalmers's words in a letter to the writer fitly record the impression made by his personality: "His was a noble life, and I thank God for such a remembrance and example to me and my children."

On June 14, 1859, Mr. Chalmers married Constance Edlmann, a sister of Lady Collet; their son, Lawrence Edlmann Chalmers, born on June 7, 1863, at Sandfield, Bickley, Kent, is now a partner of Brown, Shipley & Company.

## IX

## HERMAN HOSKIER

From a fragmentary diary kept by Mr. Hoskier, a copy of which was given me by his son, Herman C. Hoskier, I take the following facts. In the same year in which Mr. Hoskier was born, 1832, his father, Herman Christian Hoskier, was appointed Vice-Consul for the United States at Christiania. In 1840, the family removed to Copenhagen. In 1846, Mr. Hoskier and his brother Emile were at school in Berlin, where the former remained during 1847. In 1848, he was in Florence, studying there, and the following year, 1849, travelled with his father to Naples and Rome.

In January, 1850, he began his business career as a clerk in his father's office in Algiers, where he had settled after leaving Copenhagen. He left on the 5th of August of the same year for New York, via Liverpool, and soon after his arrival on the 1st of September, he entered the office of Dutilh & Company. In 1851, he was sent to London on business by Dutilh & Company and returned the same year. In 1853 he went again to London and entered Hambro's office, where he remained but a short time, and rejoined his New York friends the latter part of that year. In 1854, he was sent to Liverpool to open a house for Dutilh & Company and remained there as agent and manager until 1857. In the disastrous year of 1857, he was in New York in November and in London in December. On the 30th of December he writes: "They [Dutilhs] have been through terrible days, but hope the worst is over," and adds that they want him to manage their new house there. He did not, however, feel like taking this responsibility for others. In 1858 and 1859, he was in Liverpool, waiting while business readjusted itself. He had many warm friends there, the Sellars, Prioleaus, Newhalls, and especially Stewart Henry Brown, with whom he lived for a time in bachelor's

quarters. Before leaving New York for Mobile, toward the end of 1859, he writes:

Tous ces messieurs m'ont très bien reçu et j'ai retrouvé ici mon ami *Stewart*. . . . Depuis hier je suis à la campagne chez les *Brown*. Ils ont une charmante maison avec une vue magnifique et de très beaux appartements. On vit comme des coqs en pâte et je voudrais leur rendre toute leur amabilité par un peu de gâté et d'entrain, mais tu dois pouvoir t'imaginer ce que c'est.<sup>1</sup> Je crois qu'il va y avoir du monde aujourd'hui et je tâcherai de me mieux comporter. *Stewart* a 7 ou 8 frères et 2 sœurs, dont une d'environ 20 ou 22 ans très gentille et aimable. Elle a une jolie voix et nous a chanté quelques jolies choses de la favorite de *Traviata* et quelques "Ballades." Je compte rester encore un jour chez les *Brown* (leur campagne porte nom, "Robinswood"); après ça je reviendrai en ville et je compte prendre une chambre avec l'ami *Funch*, car la vie d'Hotel est ruineuse, et j'ai eu à payer 250 francs pour une semaine!"

Of his connection with *Brown, Shipley & Company* he writes as follows under date of June 16, 1900:

In 1859, being then in Liverpool and on intimate terms with *Stewart Henry Brown*, one of the junior partners in *Brown, Shipley & Company*, I was sent for by *Mr. Francis Hamilton*, the senior partner in England, and offered the firm's agency at Mobile in succession to *Mr. Charles D. Dickey*, called to join the firm in New York. I accepted the proposal, the terms being — p. a., rising to — if I was found suitable for the post, but liable to be dismissed on a payment down of —.

In September, 1859, I sailed for my destination in the *Cunard steamer Persia* (which was nearly lost), remaining some two or three months in the New York office before proceeding to Mobile via New Orleans, to be initiated in my duties by that best of all men, *Mr. Dickey*, at whose hands I received endless kindness and consideration as well as from his charming wife.

I was married on February 8, 1860, to *Miss E. C. Byrne* of New

<sup>1</sup> His son adds, "My mother, his fiancée, had left for New Orleans that day."

Orleans and left in charge in the spring of that year, sailing for Europe in the summer and returning to my own duties in the following October.

In 1861 the Civil War broke out, but I remained at my post notwithstanding much trouble, anxiety and some danger, succeeding however in clearing the port and nearly the whole state of the balance of that year's cotton crop, making a large sum in Exchange, and consigning some 30,000 bales cotton to Brown, Shipley & Company, Liverpool. I remember the *Perthshire* was the last vessel to clear before the blockade by the United States became effective! In those days the New Orleans agency was conducted by an old servant of the firm, a very peculiar and rather irascible old gentleman by name Morrell, but devoted to the business, and we worked very harmoniously together and to good purpose in those difficult times.

I left Mobile in June, 1861, never to return, much to my regret. The journey north was a very arduous one through the military lines, but I arrived safely in New York with my wife and child, and left shortly afterwards for England. I found both Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Collet ill and I was asked to remain in Liverpool to assist Mr. S. H. Brown, which I did until 1864, when I accompanied Mr. Collet to open the London House in the now well known "Founders' Court."

In 1866 I was made a partner, at the suggestion of Mr. James Brown, I believe, and I remained so until 1880, when my health and other circumstances determined me to retire, though it cost me much anguish and regret to give up my connection with the firm and the partners at whose hands I had received so much kindness.

We have however always remained the best of friends up to this day, and I am sure we shall remain so to the end.

As Mr. Hoskier's brothers and sisters and their families lived in Paris, he was naturally greatly disturbed by the conduct of the Prussians in the Franco-Prussian War. All letters received from Paris at that time were sent out by balloons and answers returned by pigeon post. He was one of the very first to enter Paris after the armistice and has often spoken of it as a terrible journey. He writes: "After passing the lines and entering the city, it seemed passing strange in

this quondam pleasure city to see people staring open-eyed at bread and meat now visible in the bakers' and butchers' shops, not to see one single cab in all Paris, nor any civilians, all in uniform—though, alas, disarmed," etc. He adds: "*My business has not been bad*, my domestic happiness complete, and thanks to God the other members of my family have also reason to be thankful notwithstanding the terrible events through which they have passed."

In 1881, he became a director of the Union Bank, and from that time, and for several years, until his health failed, he was much in the city, acting often in a confidential capacity for his old friends, the Browns, Morgans, Barings, and Hambros, in whose offices he was always a welcome visitor. In 1887, he became a director of Guinness's Brewery and took a large part in the financial management of that concern, insisting always upon its difference from other breweries. It had no tied<sup>1</sup> houses and fifty per cent. of its product, which was absolutely pure, was used medicinally. In 1893, on the death of the Governor of the Union Bank, he was offered that position, but declined it. In 1897, at the terrible fire at the Charitable Bazaar in Paris, Mrs. Emile Hoskier—his brother's wife—and her daughter, Mrs. Roland Gosselin, perished. In 1899, at the outbreak of the Boer War, his son Frank left for South Africa and lost his life the following year. As his son left no will and his father became his heir, Mr. Hoskier took great pains to disburse a large part of his property in military circles where he thought it would do most good.

After coming to London in 1864, he resided most of the time out of the city, first at Queenswood, then at Blackheath, then for a short time in London to be near his friend Sellars, who had just lost his wife, then at Rockhampton to be near his friend E. Hambro, and finally at Bickley. In the latter years of his life he was obliged to spend his winters in the south of France. In December, 1903, he left for Biarritz, but could only proceed as far as Paris, where he suffered such a violent attack of angina pectoris that he tried to return home.

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, controlled by purchase or lease.



He was only able to reach Folkestone, where he died at the Pavilion Hotel, on the 7th of May, 1904. Sir Mark Collet was with him a short time before his death and the interview was most touching. His son speaks of him as "a good true man, a solid friend in need, of excellent judgment in all that pertains to worldly wisdom, but always conscious of his demerit, and fearful of being unworthy to reach the heaven above." All who knew him intimately can confirm the truth of these words.

## X

## SIR MARK WILKS COLLET, BART.

As the principal events in Sir Mark's business career have been mentioned in extracts from his own letters in Chapters VI and VII, it only remains for me to add a few particulars.

In a letter, dated April 10, 1900, Sir Mark writes: "My birthplace was London. I was born on September 17, 1816, at Highbury Grove, then a rural suburb, now covered with what you call small tenement houses, within the metropolitan area. My father was English. My mother was born in Russia of Dutch parents, at Archangel, where part of my boyhood was passed at school."

Sir Mark Collet's father, James Collet, born July 27, 1784, at Douglas, Isle of Man, was the son of John Collet (who died at Cape Coast Castle about 1821) and Anne Wilks. His mother was Wendelina Elizabeth, daughter of Abraham Van Brienens of Archangel.

James Collet and Abraham Van Brienens were at one time rich merchants, but were both ruined owing to the Napoleonic wars.

On the death of her husband, Mrs. [James] Collet went to live at Douglas, Isle of Man, in order to be near the Cubbons, her husband's cousins; though about that time Sir Mark Cubbon was abroad as Governor of Madras. Later she returned to her own brother at Archangel with her three sons and remained there until about 1830. There the sons learned to speak Russian and German before they

could speak English. The facilities for education in Archangel are said to have been very good.

In order to maintain their nationality, Mrs. Collet moved to London with her youngest son in 1832, and lived in England until her death on the 4th of October, 1868.

Sir Mark had preceded her by a few years and completed his knowledge of English after he reached London, although he had acquired a certain knowledge of it at the schools in Archangel. French he learned later. He was a cultivated man, well read in the best English and foreign literature, and a good conversationalist. His letters were models of a good English style, although his business correspondence was apt to be unnecessarily long. He always wrote with a quill pen which he made and mended for himself.

Soon after moving to London, in 1863, he became a director of the London Assurance, and held that position from 1863 to 1885, when he was obliged to give it up, owing to the incompatibility of attending the weekly meeting of the Court on Wednesdays at the same hour as the Committee of Treasury at the Bank of England. It is interesting to know that the Royal Exchange Assurance Corporation, the London Assurance Corporation, and the Bank of England are the three oldest chartered associations in London, and that of one of them, the Royal Exchange, Mr. Hamilton was a director and for a number of years Governor, and of the two latter, Sir Mark was a director, and of the Bank of England both Deputy Governor and Governor.

On the 23d of July, 1850, at Bury St. Edmunds, Sir Mark married Susan Gertrude Eyre, of Beverley, Yorkshire. She died on the 22d of July, 1851, at the house of a Miss Hodgson in Liverpool, whence she was taken on her arrival in the *Arctic* from New York. They had one daughter, Lina Susan Penelope Collet, born May 13, 1851, at New York, who married on the 15th of November, 1870, at Shirley, Frederick Henry Norman, son of George Warde Norman, of Bromley, Kent. One of their sons, Montagu Collet Norman, D.S.O., born September 6, 1871, is now a member of the firm.

On the 8th of May, 1862, at Chiselhurst, Sir Mark was married for the second time to Antonia Frederica, daughter of Joseph Edlmann, of Hawkwood. He was created a baronet in 1889 while Governor of the Bank of England, in recognition of his services to the Government in connection with the refunding of the English debt. He died in London, April 25, 1905, leaving one son, Sir Mark Collet, the present baronet.

He was a deeply religious man, a firm believer in the principles of a state church, but with broad sympathies for all forms of Christian work and worship. While living in Liverpool, and later at his beautiful home at St. Clere in Kent, he served as churchwarden of the parish churches, and in the latter place was accustomed to assist the clergyman by reading the Lessons. I can never forget the Sunday evening services at St. Clere, when with guests and servants assembled in the upper hall, after the usual evening hymn and Scripture lesson, Sir Mark gave a brief practical exposition of the passage he had read, never glossing over a difficulty, but drawing some practical lesson for the guidance of conduct. It was after one of these Sunday evening gatherings that Mr Bayard, then United States Minister to England, a friend and guest of Sir Mark's, said that nothing during his residence in England had made a greater impression upon him than the prevalence of family prayers in English households, and expressed his deep regret that the practice had fallen into such disuse in the United States.

## XI

### FRANCIS ALEXANDER HAMILTON

From a brief memorial pamphlet issued by the Barnet Press after Mr. Hamilton's death, I take the following extracts, showing the esteem in which he was held by his nearer neighbors:

Mr. Francis Alexander Hamilton, J. P., the son of Mr. Robert Hamilton, of Little Fenton, Stoke, Staffordshire, was born at Little Fenton, on April 4th, 1814. One of the oldest families in England, the

Hamiltons can trace their ancestry back to the Norman Conquest. On the English side they are descended from the third son of Robert, Earl of Mellent, who was created Earl of Leicester by Henry I.

Mr. Hamilton was educated at Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, and entered the house of Messrs. Brown, Shipley & Company, of Liverpool—now of London—in 1832. Five years later he went to the United States, and returning to England in 1845, he became a partner in the firm of Messrs. Brown, Shipley & Company.<sup>1</sup> In 1847 he was married to Miss Eliza Pennell, daughter of Mr. Samuel Johnston, of Olinda, Cheshire, and a niece of Lady Barrow. The name of Mrs. Hamilton is never mentioned in Finchley except with deep respect, amounting almost to reverence. Her winsome personality, her graceful demeanour, and her sympathetic disposition won all hearts.

In 1866, the greatest tragedy of their lives occurred. Within a fortnight, both their sons—Wallace Johnston and Francis Follett Hamilton—were dead. It was a terrible blow, but Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, with true Christian fortitude, bore up under the ordeal, heavy though the burden was that they were called upon to bear. Then, in August, 1901, death deprived Mr. Hamilton of the earthly companionship of his good and noble wife. How Finchley mourned her loss will be well within the memory of most of our readers. And now Mr. Hamilton himself has passed away, leaving behind him his two daughters, to whom we, in common with all Finchleians, offer our sincere sympathy in their—and our—bereavement. . . .

Mr. Hamilton's death is a severe loss to many a good cause. Throughout the greater portion of a long life, he appeared to have but one aim, that of helping others. Many of his benefactions are known, though his gifts were as unostentatious as they were generous; but the world will never know even half that this noble-hearted gentleman did for the sick, for the needy, for the Church, for every good cause which came under his notice. The postmen of Church End have long enjoyed Mr. Hamilton's hospitality. It has been the custom of the early morning letter carrier to breakfast at Brent Lodge, and the night postman, on completing his round, was always invited to supper.

<sup>1</sup> In 1845 known as William & James Brown & Company.

Wealth has spoiled many a good man, but in Mr. Hamilton's case it made a good man a better man; made him the more solicitous for the welfare of others, the more active in succoring the weaknesses and relieving the necessities of those around him. Peace to his ashes. Long may his gracious personality, his noble life, his inspiring ex-

Mr. Hamilton's death occurred on Saturday, February 2, 1907. The funeral took place on Thursday afternoon, and the proceedings from beginning to end were quite in accordance with the life and character of the man—unostentatious, dignified, impressive. Though the streets from Brent Lodge to the Parish Church, and thence to St. Marylebone Cemetery, were lined with people, and 500 congregated in the neighborhood of and inside the church, while upwards of 1,000 assembled in the cemetery, there was a subdued air everywhere, and all was strangely silent. And that overpowering silence was eloquent testimony to the esteem—one might almost say, reverence—in which Mr. Hamilton was held by the people of Finchley.

St. Mary's day schools were closed on Thursday afternoon, in order that the children and staff of teachers might attend the funeral. All the tradesmen at Church End closed their premises earlier than usual as a token of respect, blinds were drawn at nearly all the houses along the route, and the majority of people in and about the streets wore some emblem of mourning.

My own association with Mr. Hamilton began in 1863 during my stay in the Liverpool office. I remember him as a splendid horseman, conspicuous in the hunting field as a bold but steady rider. While living in Liverpool and until the death of his sons in 1866, he hunted regularly in the winter with the Cheshire hounds.

Mr. Hamilton filled many important places of public trust, and among others that of director in the Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Company. On his removal to London he was elected director in the Royal Exchange Assurance Company, was deputy-governor from 1867 to 1879, and Chairman of the Court from 1890 to 1892, when he retired.

He was a deeply religious man, a devoted member of the Church

of England. No one who was present at morning prayers at Brent Lodge, Finchley, can forget the occasion, or fail to carry away a lasting impression of the scene. In addition to the family circle and household servants, the laborers on the place, in their working clothes neatly brushed for the service, were also present. Mr. Hamilton read the Scripture lesson and the prayers for the day in a manner so reverent as to make all feel that to him at least the service was no mere form, but a true preparation for the day's work.

He was an unostentatious but liberal giver, not only to the various forms of work in which his church was engaged, but also to almost every well-known philanthropic and charitable association in Liverpool and London. He was specially interested in, and a liberal contributor to, the London hospitals, and one of his most generous gifts was to the Waterloo Bridge Hospital, where he added a new ward. This ward when finished was opened by the Princess Louise. It was the intention of the authorities to call it the Hamilton Ward, but, with his characteristic modesty and good sense, he earnestly entreated that his name should be suppressed and that the ward should be known as the Princess Louise Ward, on the ground that the name of the Princess Louise would be more likely to attract subscribers than his own. Her Royal Highness, not without an earnest protest, acquiesced in his request, and few people in London to-day know that this handsome Princess Louise Ward at the Waterloo Bridge Hospital, built and equipped at the cost of many thousand pounds, was the generous gift of Mr. Hamilton. He was a giver from principle and not from impulse, and regularly set aside each year a goodly portion of his income for works of benevolence and charity.

No account of the life of Mr. Hamilton would be complete which did not include a special tribute to the character and gracious personality of Mrs. Hamilton. Although for many years confined to her home on account of ill health, no one could come in contact with her without carrying away a lasting impression of her cheerfulness under suffering, and her active interest in the well-being of all about her.

## XII

## SIR ALEXANDER HARGREAVES BROWN, BART.

It has been my rule, in choosing the subjects for the brief biographical sketches which precede, to speak only of those who have passed away. In the case of Sir Alexander Hargreaves Brown, Bart., I have made an exception to this rule. The length of his parliamentary service, as well as the fact that he is the senior member of the London firm, renders appropriate a brief notice of his public career, and I therefore with his consent reproduce here the account of his parliamentary service, which appeared in the *Wellington Journal and Shrewsbury News*, of November 17, 1906, on the occasion of a public dinner tendered to him by his friends and constituents upon the resignation of his seat in Parliament after thirty-eight years of continuous service:

Sir Alexander Hargreaves Brown was born on April 11, 1844, and is a grandson of Sir William Brown of Liverpool. He is a partner in the firm of Brown, Shipley & Company, bankers, who are the English house of Brown Bros. & Co., of Philadelphia and New York. He married a daughter of Mr. C. R. Blandy of Madeira. He was formerly a cornet in the 6th Dragoon Guards, and is honorary colonel of the 1st Lancashire Volunteer Artillery, and has the Volunteer Officers' decoration. He is a justice of the peace for Surrey and Lancashire. His eldest son, Lieutenant Gordon Hargreaves Brown (Coldstream Guards) was born on July 31, 1880, and his second son, Mr. Walter Hargreaves Brown, is in the London Bank. Before his retirement at the close of the last Parliament, Sir Alexander Brown was one of the oldest members of the House of Commons. Nearly 40 years ago he was elected Member of Parliament for the borough of Wenlock, which he represented up to 1885, when the redistribution of seats took place. At the election in 1885 Sir Alexander contested Wellington Division as a Liberal, and he was opposed in the Conservative interest by the Right Hon. Colonel W. S. Kenyon-Slaney,

whom he defeated. At the time of the Home Rule split Sir Alexander Brown joined the Unionist party, and was afterwards returned to Parliament unopposed. At the election in 1892, however, he was opposed by Mr. Harris Sanders, the Liberal candidate. The Unionist member retained his seat by a majority of 1,283. At the election of 1900 Sir Alexander Brown was opposed by Mr. Robert Varty of Thundersleigh, Essex, and on this occasion retained his seat by 1,209. In 1902 Sir A. H. Brown was made a baronet in recognition of his long service in the House of Commons, and the excellent work he did as chairman of Private Bill committees. He completed thirty-eight years' unbroken Parliamentary service, and was regarded, next to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, as father of the House of Commons. It was therefore fitting that his former constituents should recognize his valuable services, extending over so long a period. On Monday evening Sir Alexander Brown was entertained at dinner in the Wellington Town Hall, and made the recipient of a handsome silver candelabrum weighing 356 ounces, of George III period, and bearing the following inscription: "Presented to Sir Alexander Hargreaves Brown, Bart., on his retirement, by his late constituents, in recognition of his 38 years' continuous service as member of Parliament for the borough of Wenlock (1868 to 1885) and the Mid or Wellington Division of Shropshire (1885 to 1905), November 12, 1906."

Sir A. H. Brown, who was accorded a very enthusiastic reception on rising to reply, said he came there that night with mingled feelings. He thought of the days he had spent in trying to do what he could for the electors of the Wellington Division of Shropshire, and he was almost overwhelmed by the kindness shown to him on this occasion; he thanked them most sincerely for the handsome present. Their gift proved to him that his services had been appreciated, and it would remind him of their kindness and friendship, and of the many happy hours he had spent in their service in the House of Commons. (Applause.) Thirty-eight years in the public service was a long period, and he had given the best part of his life to the duties of member of Parliament. He remembered the time in 1868 when he came to the borough of Wenlock with fear and trembling, and he might have been regarded as an impudent young man for coming forward



and trying to persuade the electors of Wenlock that he was a better man than the other candidates. (Laughter.) He had a sort of feeling that was not pleasant, and he almost wished he had given up the effort. But at that time there were two men especially who stood by his side and urged him to continue his political aspirations. One gentleman was sitting by his side that evening—Mr. J. P. G. Smith—(applause)—and the other, who unfortunately was not present, but who was his (Sir Alexander's) guide and prophet at that time, and is still living, was Mr. John Randall. (Applause.) He was glad to be able to acknowledge their services. To his surprise, when a by-election took place for Wenlock, he was returned. From that day to this he had endeavored to do what he could in Parliament for the constituency he represented. (Applause.) There had been difficulties at times. When the "flowing tide" was on their side the elections were easy; on the other hand, when the conditions were not so favorable, there had been opposition to overcome. He wished to thank all his friends and those who were absent, who had stood by him on all occasions. He also desired to thank his opponents of those days who had conducted their opposition in such a way as to enable him to count them as his friends, although opposed to him politically. (Hear, hear.) He had been a prominent figure in eight elections; four were contested, four were non-contested, and, as he had already stated, most of his political opponents were also his friends. There had been many changes during the last 38 years, and he held the opinion that the Governments in power during that period deserved well of the country. There had been progress, and many good and useful measures had been placed on the Statute Book. Legislation accomplished by the respective Governments had been for the benefit of the people of the country; the cause of temperance had advanced, the education question had occupied a prominent place—as it should do—in the discussions in Parliament, and he was glad to say that in that direction considerable progress had been made. (Applause.) Philanthropic and charitable institutions were better supported, the British Empire had been extended, peace reigned in India, and they had a broader idea of the duties of citizenship. In those matters, and many others he need not mention, he had played

a humble part, and now he was content to retire into private life, sit at his own fireside, and look back upon the time when he represented the constituency in Parliament. They had done their best to help him in every possible way—they had excused his shortcomings, and he wished to thank them all for the kindness he had received. He tendered his thanks to them for the very beautiful present they had given him, and he wished prosperity to them all, and Divine guidance to all in his old constituency of Wellington. Whatever might be their fortunes in the future he only hoped that in the prosperity and improvement in the general conditions of the country, Wellington would participate in that improvement and prosperity. (Applause.)

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### **III**

#### **TABLES SHOWING THE LENGTH OF SERVICE OF THE DIFFERENT MEMBERS OF THE ALLIED FIRMS**

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- I. ALEXANDER BROWN, ALEXANDER BROWN & SON, ALEXANDER BROWN & SONS, BROWN BROTHERS & COMPANY, AGENCY, BALTIMORE**
- II. WILLIAM & JAMES BROWN & CO., BROWN, SHIPLEY & COMPANY, LIVERPOOL & LONDON**
- III. JOHN A. BROWN & CO., BROWNS & BOWEN, BROWN BROTHERS & CO., PHILADELPHIA**
- IV. BROWN BROTHERS & COMPANY, NEW YORK**
- V. BROWN BROTHERS & COMPANY. BOSTON**

TABLE I  
ALEXANDER BROWN, ALEXANDER BROWN & SON, ALEXANDER BROWN & SONS  
BALTIMORE

	BECAME PARTNER	POWER OF ATTORNEY GRANTED	POWER OF ATTORNEY REVOKED	CEASED TO BE A PARTNER		
				BY DEATH	BY RETIREMENT	
ALEXANDER BROWN .	1800	—	—	Mar. 4, 1834	—	
WILLIAM BROWN . (afterwards SIR WILLIAM BROWN, BART.)	1805	—	—	—	June 1, 1839	W. B. not a partner in Baltimore 1810-14, as he was in England. Became partner again in autumn of 1814 when W. & J. B. & Co. began in Liverpool.
GEORGE BROWN . .	1808	—	—	Aug. 24, 1859	—	
JOHN BROWN . . . . (Afterwards JOHN A. BROWN)	1810	—	—	—	Dec. 31, 1837	Dissolution of partnership not published until June 1, 1839.
JAMES BROWN . . .	1811	—	—	—	June 1, 1839	
STEWART BROWN . .	1836	—	—	—	June 1, 1839	
SAMUEL NICHOLSON .	1836	—	—	—	June 1, 1839	

JOHNSTON McLANAHAN	1836	—	—	—	June 1, 1839
ELAN . . . . .	1836	—	—	—	June 1, 1839
HERMAN H. PERRY . .	1836	—	—	—	June 1, 1839
JOSEPH SHIPLEY . . .	1836	—	—	—	June 1, 1839
J. M. PRIESTMAN . . .	1836	—	—	—	June 1, 1839
GEORGE STEWART BROWN . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1856	—	—	May 19, 1890	—
WILLIAM H. GRAHAM	Jan. 1, 1867	—	—	Jan. 19, 1885	—
WILLIAM E. BOWEN . .	1837	—	—	—	June 1, 1839
WILLIAM GRAHAM BOWDOIN . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1872	—	—	Nov. 3, 1905	—
ALEXANDER BROWN	Jan. 1, 1883	—	—	—	—
AUSTIN McLANAHAN . .	Jan. 1, 1902	—	—	—	—
HARMAN B. BELL . . .	Jan. 1, 1902	—	—	Apr. 12, 1900	—
B. HOWELL GRIEWOLD, Jr. . . . .	Jan. 1, 1905	—	—	Jan. 1, 1901	—

A. B. & Sons assumed agency of B. B. & Co., New York, in 1885.

The Baltimore house was taken over by George Brown in 1839.

## BROWN BROTHERS &amp; COMPANY

## BALTIMORE AGENCY

	POWER OF ATTORNEY GRANTED	POWER OF ATTORNEY REVOKED	
<i>Powers of Attorney</i>			
HERMAN H. PERRY . . . . .	Feb. 7, 1863	April 28, 1863	
WILLIAM H. GRAHAM and BERNARD CAMPBELL under the firm name of CAMPBELL & GRAHAM . . . . .	April 28, 1863	May 3, 1865	
WILLIAM H. GRAHAM . . . . .	May 3, 1865	1865	Agency closed. A. B. & Co. be- came representatives of the New York, Philadelphia, and English firms in Baltimore.
JOHN N. BROWN . . . . .	May 3, 1865	1865	
JACOB HARMAN BROWN . . . . .	May 3, 1865	1865	

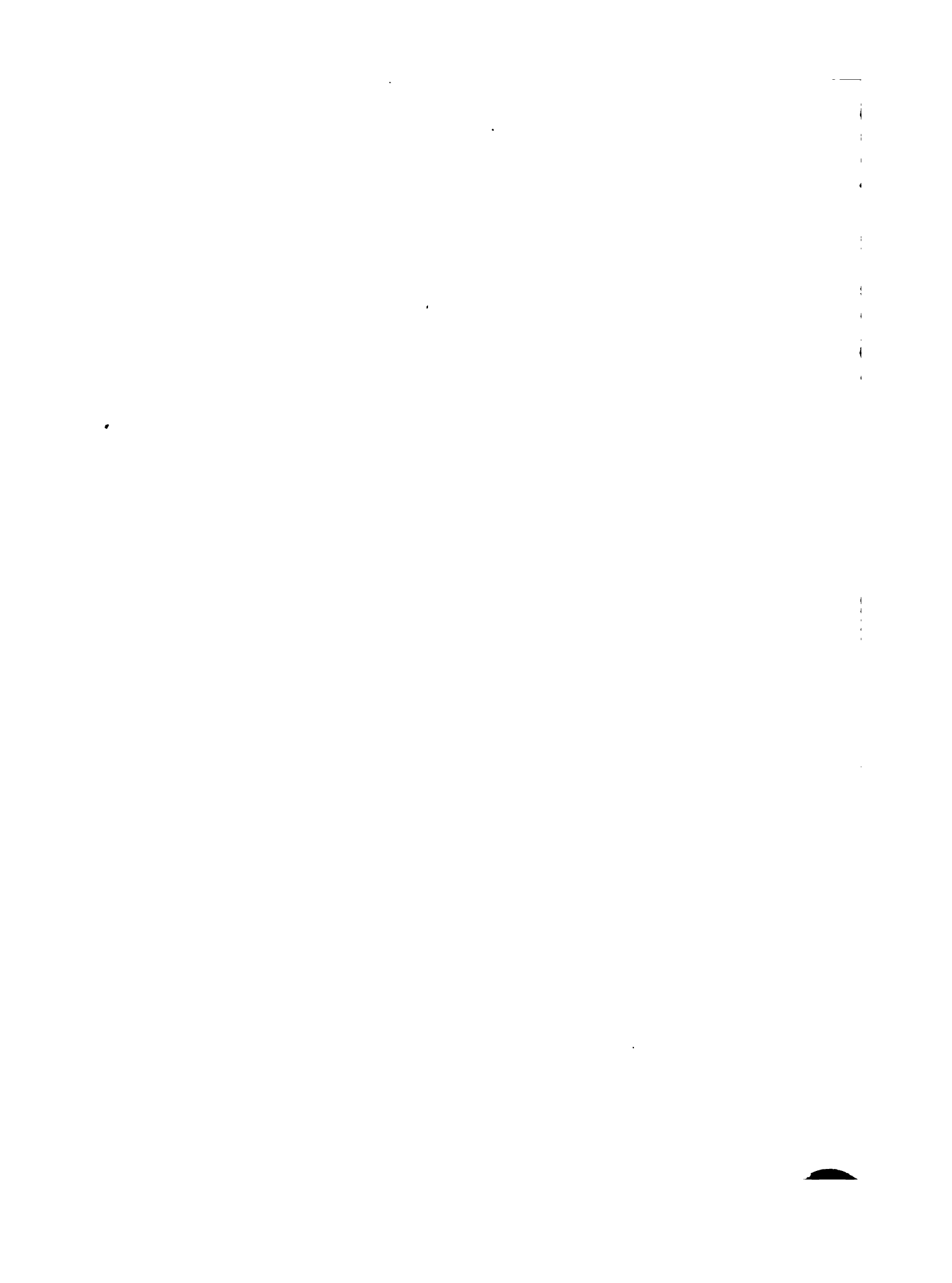




TABLE II  
WILLIAM & JAMES BROWN & CO., BROWN, SHIPLEY & CO.  
LIVERPOOL AND LONDON

	BECAME PARTNER	POWER OF ATTORNEY GRANTED	POWER OF ATTORNEY REVOKED	CEASED TO BE A PARTNER	
				BY DEATH	BY RETIREMENT
WILLIAM BROWN . . . (afterwards SIR WILLIAM BROWN, Bart.)	Autumn of 1814	—	—	Dec. 31, 1864	—
GEORGE BROWN . . .	"	—	—	—	June 1, 1839
JOHN A. BROWN . . .	"	—	—	—	Dec. 31, 1837
JAMES BROWN . . .	"	—	—	Dec. 31, 1877	—
ELBSON FRODSHAM . .	1816	—	—	—	1830
JOSEPH SHIPLEY . . .	1826	—	—	—	Dec. 31, 1850
STEWART BROWN . . .	1838	—	—	Dec. 31, 1880	—
SAMUEL NICHOLSON . .	1838	—	—	Dec. 31, 1856	—

During his whole life a partner of the Philadelphia and New York houses and of A. B. & Sons until 1839, the years 1810-14 excepted.

Although J. A. B. ceased to be interested in the Profit and Loss business after Dec. 31, 1837, the publication of the dissolution of the firm did not take place till June, 1839.

WILLIAM E. BOWEN . . . . .	1837	—	—	—	Dec. 31, 1859	—
JOHN M. PRIESTMAN . . . . .	1830	—	—	—	Dec. 31, 1846	—
FRANCIS ALEX. HAMILTON . . . . .	July 1, 1845	—	—	—	—	Dec. 31, 1903
MARK W. COLLET . . . . . (afterwards SIR MARK COLLET, Bart.)	July 1, 1851	—	—	—	Dec. 31, 1905	—
STEWART HENRY BROWN . . . . .	Jan. 21, 1856	—	—	—	—	Dec. 31, 1888
HERMAN HOSKIER . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1866	1861	—	—	—	Dec. 31, 1890
FREDERICK CHALMERS . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1869	Mar. 1, 1867	—	—	Dec. 28, 1898	—
ALEX. HARGREAVES BROWN . . . . . (afterwards SIR ALEX. HARGREAVES BROWN, Bart.)	Jan. 1, 1875	—	—	—	—	—
LAWRENCE EDLMANN CHALMERS . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1898	Mar. 1, 1892	—	—	—	—
EDWARD CLIFTON BROWN . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1899	Jan. 1, 1898	—	—	—	—
MONTAGU C. NORMAN . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1900	Jan. 1, 1899	—	—	—	—
J. LEIGH WOOD . . . . .	Oct. 1, 1907	—	—	—	—	—

The partners in the New York, Philadelphia and English houses were and are still identical.

WILLIAM & JAMES BROWN & CO., BROWN, SHIPLEY & CO.  
LIVERPOOL AND LONDON

	POWER OF ATTORNEY GRANTED	POWER OF ATTORNEY REVOKED	
<i>Powers of Attorney</i>			
GEORGE A. BROWN . . . . .	1847	Died May 11, 1870	Liverpool house given up.
EGERTON STEWART BROWN . . . . .	Oct. 1, 1885	1889	Retired to assume other duties.
JAMES HALDANE HERRIOT . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1868	Dec. 31, (?) 1888	Retired to assume other duties.
FRANCIS MCKENZIE OGILVY . . . . .	April 1, 1861. Signed B. S. & Co. Jan. 1, 1888	Dec. 31, 1903	Retired to assume other duties.
HENRY MAITLAND KERSEY . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1904	Dec. 30, 1907	Retired to assume other duties.
CHARLES WILLIAM HEATE . . . . .	May 1, 1904	—	
FRANCIS HOPE SIMPSON . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1906	—	
HENRY JOHN DOVEYTON CLERK . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1908	—	
<i>Limited Power</i>			
SIR HOWLAND ROBERTS . . . . .	1901	—	
JAMES TYHURST . . . . .	1886	1890	
JAMES TYHURST . . . . .	Enlarged 1892	1899	Retired to assume other duties.
ARTHUR HERBERT JOHNSON	Sept. 20, 1904	—	



**TABLE III**  
**JOHN A. BROWN & CO., BROWNS & BOWEN, BROWN BROTHERS & CO.**  
**PHILADELPHIA**

	BECAME PARTNER	POWER OF ATTORNEY GRANTED	POWER OF ATTORNEY REVOKED	CEASED TO BE A PARTNER		
				BY DEATH	BY RETIREMENT	
JOHN A. BROWN . . .	Oct. 10, 1818	—	—	—	Dec. 31, 1837	Signed as power of attorney for Browns & Bowen, 1840.
JOHNSTON McLANAHAN . . . . .	Probably in 1818	—	—	—	June 1, 1839	
WILLIAM E. BOWEN . . . . .	June 1, 1839	—	—	—	Dec. 1, 1859	Retired owing to ill health. Firm name changed to B. B. & Co.
EUGENE DELANO . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1894	Apr. 5, 1880	—	—	Transferred to New York, 1895	
JAMES MAY DUANE . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1896	Oct. 25, 1887	—	—	Transferred to New York, Aug 1, 1898	
GEORGE HARRISON FRAZIER . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1898	Jan. 1, 1897	—	—	—	
JAMES CROSBY BROWN . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1904	Jan. 1, 1898	—	—	—	

JOHN A. BROWN & CO., BROWNS & BOWEN, BROWN BROTHERS & CO.

PHILADELPHIA

	POWER OF ATTORNEY GRANTED	POWER OF ATTORNEY REVOKED	
<i>Powers of Attorney</i>			
THOMAS H. KIRTLEY and WILLIAM HENRY WILLIAMS jointly.	Dec. 2, 1859	Feb. 17, 1860	
THOMAS H. KIRTLEY . . . . .	Feb. 17, 1860	Dec. 19, 1877	
WILLIAM HENRY WILLIAMS . . . . .	Feb. 17, 1860	Jan. 10, 1863	
JOHN C. DAWSON . . . . .	Jan. 10, 1863	April 29, 1863	Died.
JOHN A. BROWN, JR. . . . .	June 10, 1865	Dec., 1877	Retired to assume other duties.
JAMES BROWN POTTER . . . . .	May, 1875	Dec., 1877	Retired to assume other duties.
GILBERT DE SAUMARES HAMILTON	Aug. 29, 1863	Aug. 13, 1885	Retired to assume other duties.
CHARLES D. DICKHY . . . . .	Oct. 1, 1885	—	Transferred to New York, 1868.
JOHN C. DAWSON, JR. . . . .	Limited power, 1887 Enlarged power, April 18, 1888	—	
JAMES BROWN MARKO . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1899	Nov. 29, 1902	Died.
NATHANIEL KNOWLES . . . . .	Limited power, 1902 Enlarged power, Jan. 1, 1905	—	
CHARLES F. HOFFMAN . . . . .	April 1, 1887	—	Transferred to New York, 1891.

TABLE IV  
BROWN BROTHERS & COMPANY  
NEW YORK

	BECAME PARTNER	POWER OF ATTORNEY GRANTED	POWER OF ATTORNEY REVOKED	CEASED TO BE A PARTNER	
				BY DEATH	BY RETIREMENT
JAMES BROWN . . .	Oct. 31, 1825	—	—	Dec. 31, 1877	—
SAMUEL NICHOLSON .	May, 1826	—	—	—	Dec. 31, 1856
STEWART BROWN . .	Jan. 1, 1827	—	—	Dec. 31, 1880	—
JAMES M. BROWN . .	Jan. 1, 1847	—	—	Dec. 31, 1890	—
WILLIAM B. BROWN .	Jan. 1, 1853	—	—	Dec. 31, 1854	—
GEORGE HUNTER BROWN . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1858	—	—	—	Dec. 31, 1862
CHARLES D. DICKER, SR. . . . .	Oct. 1, 1859	—	—	Dec. 31, 1897	—
HOWARD POTTER . .	Jan. 1, 1863	1859	—	Dec. 31, 1897	—
JOHN CROSBY BROWN	Jan. 1, 1864	—	—	—	—
					Lost in the "Aretic"
					Retired, owing to ill health.

APPENDICES

CLARENCE STEWART BROWN . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1867	Jan. 20, 1868	—	—	Dec. 31, 1868
JOHN E. JOHNSON .	Jan. 1, 1875	—	—	—	Dec. 31, 1886
WALDEON POST BROWN . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1887	Jan. 1, 1882	—	—	—
CHARLES D. DUCKEY JR. . . . .	Jan. 1, 1889	Oct. 1, 1888	—	—	—
EUGENE DELANO . .	Transferred from Phil- adelphia, Autumn, 1895	—	—	—	—
JAMES MAY DUANE .	Transferred from Phil- adelphia, Aug. 1, 1898	—	—	—	—
JAMES BROWN . . .	Jan. 1, 1901	Jan. 2, 1899	—	—	—
TEACHER M. BROWN	Jan. 1, 1907	Jan. 1, 1902	—	—	—
MORAU DELANO . .	Jan. 1, 1907	Jan. 1, 1904	—	—	—

Until 1839 the partners in the Baltimore, Philadelphia and Liverpool houses were also partners in the New York house, excepting Messrs. Frodsham and Priestman, and, possibly, Mr. McLanahan in Philadelphia.



**BROWN BROTHERS & COMPANY**  
NEW YORK

	POWER OF ATTORNEY GRANTED	POWER OF ATTORNEY REVOKED	
<i>Powers of Attorney</i>			
WILLIAM HARMAN BROWN . . .	May 24, 1860	1863	Retired to assume other duties.
WILLIAM H. HALSEY . . . . .	April 1, 1887	May 8, 1891	Died.
NEWBOLD LE ROY . . . . .	Limited power, Feb. 6, 1899		
CHARLES F. HOFFMAN . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1891	April 9, 1909	Died.
JAMES M. BROWN, JR. . . . .	Jan. 2, 1907	—	
CHARLES F. DELLINGER . . . . .	April 25, 1909		

TABLE V  
BROWN BROTHERS & COMPANY  
BOSTON

	POWER OF ATTORNEY GRANTED	POWER OF ATTORNEY REVOKED	
<i>Powers of Attorney</i>			
THOMAS B. CURTIS . . . . .	Dec. 8, 1844	Jan. 1, 1863	Retired.
DANIEL S. CURTIS . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1863	April 29, 1878	Retired.
STARBUCKS WHITON . . . . .	Limited power, Jan. 1, 1863	April 29, 1878	
GEORGE E. BULLARD . . . . .	April 29, 1878	Dec. 31, 1908	Retired after 52 years of service.
LOUIS CURTIS . . . . .	April 29, 1878	—	
GEORGE ABBOTT . . . . .	May 5, 1899	—	
GEORGE A. NASH . . . . .	May 5, 1899	—	
HENRY P. BINNEY . . . . .	Jan. 1, 1907	—	



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